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Advising the citizen

Citizens Advice Bureaux, voluntarism and the welfare state in England, 1938-1964

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Advising the citizen: Citizens Advice Bureaux, voluntarism and the welfare state in England, 1938-1964

Oliver Blaiklock

Thesis submitted for the Degree of Doctor of Philosophy

October 2012

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Abstract

Historians of the British welfare state have only recently begun to assess the continued importance of charitable and voluntary organizations in the delivery of welfare services. My thesis contributes to this growing area of research on the nature of the British state, its development, and its interaction with civil society. Through a historical analysis of the records of the Citizens' Advice Bureaux (created in 1939) and the National Council of Social Service (its parent organization), the thesis seeks to place the history of this small but important voluntary organization in the context of the post-war history of the changing relationship between the state, society and individual. The data was collected from January 2009 to June 2012.

The research also focuses on the motives of individual volunteers, many of whom were drawn from the expanding and diversifying middle classes. Rather than suggesting that volunteering was an act designed to reassert social leadership, this research paints a more complicated picture, showing that class was not the only factor in influencing people's decisions to volunteer. Volunteering continued to provide an outlet for multiple groups including married women and retired professionals of both sexes.

Overall the initial findings of the research suggest that rather than signalling a decline in voluntary effort, the growth in scale and complexity of the welfare state actually created more opportunities for volunteering and for volunteers. It was the increasing demand for voluntary services that triggered concerns about a lack of funds in voluntary organizations, rather than a decline in charitable giving per se. Voluntary organizations continued to act where the state could not for reasons of financial, political and other constraints. What is more the political significance of voluntary organizations in this period has often been underestimated. Voluntary organizations such as the CAB continued to influence policymakers in order to protect and expand the rights of disadvantaged groups including the elderly, immigrants, the disabled and other groups affected by poverty, poor housing, consumer issues and legal problems.

Word Count: 92,466

1. Introduction

1.1 Introduction

This thesis uses the records of a voluntary organization, the Citizens' Advice Bureaux (CAB) to explore the relationship of the voluntary sector to the British state, and of the state to society in mid-twentieth century Britain. By describing and analyzing the origins of the CAB in 1938 and its philosophy and functions up to 1964, the thesis provides an opportunity to consider the ways in which the voluntary sector adapted to the expansion of the state, and to a changing cultural, political, social and economic environment. The thesis considers how the CAB adapted its activities and internal structures to the changing cultural, political, social and economic environment following the expansion of the state into areas of welfare traditionally reserved for voluntary organizations. More broadly, the thesis will provide a cultural and social history of voluntary action in the two decades following the end of the Second World War, a period that Frank Prochaska argues saw the decline of voluntary organizations as providers of welfare and as embodiments of active citizenship.¹

The CAB is a voluntary organization set up at the outbreak of the Second World War to provide free independent, impartial and objective social information and advice (but not material assistance) to individuals struggling with the complexities of everyday life.² Beginning in 1939, it distributed information and advice using a largely voluntary workforce through locally organised offices across the country. Bureaux varied in size, from single individuals dispensing advice, to offices staffed by over thirty individuals and backed by a representative management committee including members of the local authority and government officials from the statutory social services. Some relied entirely on voluntary funds; others drew on statutory sources of financial support to bolster their incomes. The number of individual bureaux reached 1,000 during the Second World War, halving after the war ended, and remaining steady at around 450 throughout the 1950s, before increasing gradually to around 500 by the mid-1960s. An

¹ Frank Prochaska, *Christianity and Social Service in Modern Britain: The Disinherited Spirit* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2006).

² The Citizens' Advice Bureau is currently known as 'Citizens Advice'. Its current aims and policies can be viewed on its website: <http://www.citizensadvice.org.uk/> (accessed 22 August 2012).

estimated ten million queries were answered during the Second World War, and around one million queries were answered annually after 1945.

From its formation, the CAB quickly evolved from a first aid agency dealing with wartime social emergencies into a day-to-day advice service where personal problems headed the list of queries. Consequently, its case files provide a useful barometer of social attitudes and social problems in post-war British society. The CAB, as many of its members argued, was a unique institution and thus makes for an interesting and significant historical case study. In 1945, *The Times* said of the CAB in 1945: 'there has been no parallel voluntary movement by the people for the people.'³ A non-political body, from its foundation the CAB received praise from across the political spectrum. By studying the organization from its inception, through the first twenty-five years of its life, this thesis will highlight the continued importance of voluntary organizations in British social and political life as pioneers of new social services that the British state has been unwilling or unable to provide, and campaigners against social and economic inequality. Thus the thesis argues that voluntary organizations did not decline in importance or relevance during and after the Second World War. The CAB was just one example of a voluntary organization that grew alongside the expanded social-democratic state. The CAB was hugely important for the successful running of Britain's welfare state, and provided a crucial opportunity for the citizens of a social democracy to integrate and engage with the wider community.

The thesis ends its examination of the CAB in 1964, when it began to undergo significant change in personnel, organization and structure; this coincided with renewed government interest in the service, as well as a substantial increase in government funding. Also, a range of new, professionalised and media-conscious voluntary organizations were founded from the mid- to late-1960s (such as the Child Poverty Action Group); the CAB was influenced by these new trends in voluntary organization behaviour and form. The CAB began to change in significant ways post the mid 1960s which warrant further discussion than is possible here. The changes of the 1960s also coincided with a gap in the archived records of the CAB.

³ *The Times*, 14 September 1945, 2.

1.2. Research questions

The main research question this thesis addresses is how and why, given the changing relationship between the state and voluntary organizations following the expansion of the British welfare state, was a new voluntary organization such as the CAB able to grow and develop alongside it. Within this broader question, the thesis explores four related sub-questions concerning the aims, structure, external relations, and the variety of social and political outcomes achieved by the organization. These sub-questions are used to help structure the argument in each chapter.

1.2.1 Aims of the CAB

First, what were the aims of the CAB, and what were its preferred means of achieving them? The changes in the program or ideology of the CAB are important indicators of the changing historical role of voluntary organizations. To answer this question it is necessary to situate the CAB in its historical context, and to consider how its aims developed and changed over time. Also, it is necessary to consider what, if any, internal disagreements there were over the aims of the organization, for example, between the organization's leaders, and the workers operating on a local level in individual bureaux. What did the CAB believe its function to be in the post-war period? Did it, for example, see itself as redundant, or as a junior partner with the state? How did views surrounding its relationship with the state affect how the CAB campaigned and delivered advice and services? Was there any divergence between the CAB's attitudes and those of other voluntary organizations as to their purpose and relationship with the state? It will also be necessary to consider the internal politics of the organization, particularly surrounding the reorganising and restructuring that took place in the 1940s and 50s, and the tensions that were created. It will also be necessary to consider the non-practical power of the CAB, by which is meant the discursive power inherent within its perceived role as a pioneer and innovator of social services. The thesis seeks to explore how the CAB helped to create external perceptions of other people's needs and interests and how it projected its own interests in such a way that a

range of social groups could identify with them. Did the CAB act as a political vehicle for social groups otherwise excluded from more conventional paths of influence?⁴

In exploring the aims of the organization, it will be important to trace the attempts to educate or build 'responsible' citizens. This thesis will also explore the place of voluntary action in wider post-war discourses of citizenship and understandings of civil society. Particularly important to these questions are the changing conceptions and definitions of 'community', 'need' and 'equality'.

1.2.2 Structure, organization and resources

Another important sub-question concerns the organization and structure of the CAB, especially the processes by which decisions were made and implemented. For example, how democratic was the organization? In addressing this question it is necessary to consider the laws, rules, and procedures, as well as the degree of centralization within the CAB. Another important point relates to the resources available to the CAB. Both the financial resources and the volunteers are analyzed in terms of their composition and management. Was the CAB efficient in its work? How were disputes over the allocation of resources resolved and what values influenced the development of the CAB organization and its approach to issues such as training and the question of professionalism? How also did the finances of the NCSS and voluntary organizations more generally adapt to the fluctuating funding streams of governments and how, if at all, did the shifting dynamic of funding sources affect their activities? To answer these questions it will be necessary to assess the significance of legislation affecting charities, particularly the 1960 Charities Act and its legal and financial implications. It will also be important to consider the significance of charitable trusts and foundations active during this period.

The thesis approaches these questions by situating the CAB against the wider socio-economic environment and the opportunities and constraints voluntary organizations faced during this period. It explores how the CAB was shaped by questions of race, gender and class. It will be important to consider how a changing society affected the

⁴ See Alan J. Kidd 'Philanthropy and the Social History Paradigm, *Social History*, 21/2 (1996), 180-192. See also R. J. Morris, *Class, Sect and Party: The Making of the British Middle Class, Leeds 1820-1950* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1990).

activities of the CAB and voluntary action in general: for example, the increase in the proportion of married women (traditionally the keenest volunteers) in work since the Second World War. It will consider one of the main themes of the period: professionalization, and in particular, the relationship between volunteers and the increasingly well-trained and professionalized social workers of the late 1950s and 1960s.

1.2.3 External relations

The third question asks: how did the CAB engage with its environment? What signs of support, neutrality or opposition can be found through the first twenty-five years of its existence? In order to answer this question the thesis explores how the organization was viewed by contemporaries. What was the ideological climate surrounding voluntary social work and how did the CAB attempt to portray itself in the eyes of contemporaries? What did key opinion formers such as newspapers and other media think of it? How did public authorities such as civil servants and the legal professions view the CAB? The thesis also considers its relations with political parties and governments. How did the CAB deal with other voluntary organizations, charities, and social workers? Did it deal effectively with opponents? Did the public endorse its work, and how did the volunteers view the work of the organization? Additionally, it will be necessary to consider how the state adapted to the changing roles of the CAB and voluntary organizations more generally. How for example, did the state in this period regard its role in the delivery of social services, and how did it relate to popular aspirations in terms of policy goals and legal structures? How did policy-makers and civil servants view the activities of voluntary organizations, particularly with regard to activities carried out for the state or in partnership with the state? Ideas and assumptions about the alleged characteristics and potential of voluntary organizations have played an important part in the perceptions of policy-makers, and they too will be considered.

1.2.4 Outcomes

Fourth, and finally, the outcomes of CAB activities are assessed in terms of its impact on society and its members. Was the CAB rejected or accepted by the public and government authorities? Was it able to achieve positive outcomes in the form of new laws and/or treatment for individuals by statutory services? Was it an effective agent of

political change, or a barrier to social change? How did activists and volunteers view their efforts when working for the organization? The contribution of the CAB towards the stability of Britain in this period, and the effectiveness of the welfare state and the justice system are assessed.

The research questions behind the thesis will focus on the historical processes by which the CAB adapted its activities and roles during a period of relative affluence and 'universal' state welfare provision. More broadly, this thesis considers the processes of institutional and social adaptation to the post-war welfare state. These questions will take account of the political, economic, social and cultural dimensions of that adaptation. Each set of questions will be considered against the backdrop of the main trends and narratives of post-war historiography, namely, economic growth and modernisation, changing demography and family structures, affluence and consumerism, political consensus, and the rise of the welfare state.

1.3. The existing literature

This section summarizes the existing literature regarding voluntary organizations and the various attempts by scholars to categorize and understand their place in society, in relation to the various questions addressed by the thesis. The existing literature on voluntary organizations is diverse, and reflects the interest shown in them by a number of different intellectual disciplines, including historians. Political scientists, sociologists, and social policy analysts have been interested in the potential of voluntary organizations to provide welfare services, act as agents of association and integration, as well as pressure groups in the political process. Political and social historians have charted the changing role of voluntary organizations as providers of welfare services and agents of political change.

Despite extensive research on the history of post-war Britain, the actions and contributions of voluntary organizations have only recently come under sustained historical scrutiny.⁵ Historians of post-war Britain have referred to the importance of

⁵ Matthew Hilton, James McKay, Nicholas Crowson, and Jean-François Mouhot, *The Politics of Expertise: How NGOs Shaped Modern Britain* (Oxford: OUP, 2013); Nicholas Crowson, Matthew Hilton, James McKay (eds.), *NGOs in Contemporary Britain. Non-state actors in society and politics since 1945* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2009); Melanie Oppenheimer and Nicholas Deakin (eds.), *Beveridge and Voluntary Action in*

voluntary organizations in the history of welfare and in the wider socio-political realm.⁶ Until the 1980s, the historiography of the welfare state tended to focus almost exclusively on the state while stressing the eventual triumph of collectivism over individualism.⁷ Frank Prochaska, Brian Harrison, Pat Thane, and Jane Lewis have all explored aspects of the role of charities and voluntary bodies in British history. Geoffrey Finlayson has reminded historians of the mixed nature of Britain's welfare provision through his description of the 'moving frontier', between the individual, agencies within the voluntary, commercial and informal sectors, and the state.⁸ By putting voluntary organizations in historical perspective, historians have been able to assess their roles in shaping continuity and change in British society.

Britain and the Wider British World (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2011). Colin Rochester, George Campbell Gosling, Alison Penn, Meta Zimmeck (eds.), *Understanding the Roots of Voluntary Action. Historical Perspectives on Current Social Policy* (Brighton: Sussex Academic Press, 2011); Colin Rochester, Angela Ellis Paine, Steven Howlett and Meta Zimmeck, *Volunteering and Society in the 21st Century* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2010); Matthew Hilton and James McKay (eds.), *The Ages of Voluntarism. How we got to the Big Society* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011); Helen McCarthy & Pat Thane, 'The Politics of Association in Industrial Society', *Twentieth Century British History*, 22/2, (2011) 217-229; Pat Thane 'There's always been a 'Big Society'. www.historyworkshop.org.uk posted April 30 2011. [Accessed 10 September 2011]; Pat Thane, "The 'Big Society' and the 'Big State': Creative Tension or Crowding Out?" *Twentieth Century British History*, 23/3 (2012), 408-429; Matthew Hilton, Nick Crowson, Jean-Francois Mouhot, James McKay *A Historical Guide to NGOs in Britain. Charities, Civil Society and the Voluntary Sector since 1945* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2012); Pat Thane and Tanya Evans *Sinners? Scroungers? Saints? Unmarried Motherhood in 20th century England* (Oxford: OUP, 2012); Kate Bradley, *Poverty, Philanthropy and the State. Charities and the Working Classes in London 1918-79*. (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2009).

⁶ By voluntary organization I mean a self-governing body of people who have joined together voluntarily to take action for the benefit of the community and have been established otherwise than for financial gain. This definition includes self-help mutual aid groups such as Trade Unions and Friendly Societies, and charitable and philanthropic organizations.

⁷ Jane Lewis, *The Voluntary Sector, the state and Social Work in Britain: The Charity Organization Society/Family Welfare Association since 1869* (Aldershot: Edward Elgar, 1995), p.1; Martin Daunton, J. , 'Payment and Participation: Welfare and state-Formation in Britain, 1900-1951', *Past and Present*, 150 (1996) 169-216.

⁸ Pat Thane, *The Foundations of the Welfare state* (London: Longman, 1982), Frank Prochaska, *The Voluntary Impulse: Philanthropy in Modern Britain* (London: Faber, 1988), Geoffrey Finlayson, *Citizen, state, and Social Welfare in Britain, 1830-1990* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1994), Brian Harrison, *Peaceable Kingdom: Stability and Change in Modern Britain* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1982), p. 9.

Historical accounts of voluntary organizations have tended to focus on the mid to late 1960s, and the creation of more radical, professional and 'media savvy' pressure and campaigning groups, such as the Child Poverty Action Group.⁹ The period from 1945 to the mid 1960s has been, until recently, portrayed by historians as a lost time for voluntary organizations, especially when compared with the pre-war period when, it is argued, they played an important part in the making of the welfare state.¹⁰ However, there is increasing historical evidence to suggest that voluntary organizations were able to develop and grow during the post-war period.¹¹ Some political scientists have also tended to view existing voluntary organizations as socially conservative, and as embodiments of a pre-war philanthropic and paternalist tradition.¹² In fact, some were just as pioneering, innovative and successful in responding to new needs and to applying pressure to governments as the new organizations of the late 1960s. It has also been argued, for example by Jeremy Kendall and Martin Knapp that the new organizations of the late 1960s gave a new image to the voluntary sector, which was favoured by politicians of the time and Labour politicians in particular.¹³ Evidence, such as the 1948 House of Lords debate on voluntary action suggests that not all

⁹ Michael McCarthy, *Campaigning for the Poor: CPAG and the Politics of Welfare* (London: Croom Helm, 1986).

¹⁰ Maria Brenton, *The Voluntary Sector in British Social Services* (London: Longman, 1985), Nicholas. Deakin, 'The perils of partnership: the voluntary sector and the state, 1945-92', in J. S. Davis, C. Rochester, and R. Hedley (eds.), *An Introduction to the Voluntary Sector* (London: Routledge, 1995), 40-65; David Owen, *English Philanthropy 1660-1960* (Mass. Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1964). Committee on Voluntary Organizations, *The Future of Voluntary Organizations: Report of the Wolfenden Committee*, (London: Croom Helm, 1978).

¹¹ Just some of the organizations founded during this time include: Leonard Cheshire Foundation, the Spastics Society, the National Association for Mental Health (now MIND), the British Heart Foundation, Samaritans, Alcoholics Anonymous, Cruse Bereavement, and the National Marriage Guidance Council.

¹² Adam Lent, *British Social Movements since 1945: Sex, Colour, Peace and Power* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2001).

¹³ Jeremy Kendall and Martin Knapp, *The Voluntary Sector in the United Kingdom* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1996), 6.

politicians were as hostile to voluntary organizations as some historians have suggested.¹⁴

More generally, the existing literature concerning voluntary organizations and the welfare state, until recently, has largely taken a static view of welfare, focusing on the overriding role of the state. In this context, voluntary action has been seen as weak in relation to what was considered to be a comprehensive system of state welfare. However there are signs that the voluntary sector has adapted to the changing role of the state and wider cultural change and continues to thrive. This thesis will examine that process of adaptation while considering the size, growth, leadership and shape of one particular organization; its role, campaigns, organization and contribution to debates over issues of citizenship and political participation; and its success in achieving goals and legislation; as well as its relationship with the state.

Historical accounts of the CAB are few. Early attempts to place the CAB in its historical context were written by workers within the organization. Margaret Brasnett's account of the first twenty-five years of the CAB was written in celebration of its silver anniversary in 1964. Her work is celebratory in tone, uses few sources, and is scant on evidence from outside the organization. It was clearly influenced by the experiences of Brasnett herself as a senior officer within the organization's headquarters.¹⁵ Another institutional account was written by Jean Richards, a former officer within the upper management of the national organization during the late 1970s and early 1980s.¹⁶ Her intention was to show how the Citizens Advice Bureaux had 'flourished, declined and flourished again, and to explain some of the difficulties which the CAB service has faced in the fifty years of its history.' Richards 'presentist' account criticised the central organization of the CAB for its inefficiency, and the volunteers for their lack of professionalism and qualifications. This ignores the broader historical context surrounding the creation and evolution of the CAB, and utilizes anachronistic

¹⁴ See Nicholas Deakin and Justin Davis Smith, 'Labour, charity and voluntary action: the myth of hostility', in Matthew Hilton and James McKay ed. *The Ages of Voluntarism: How we got to the Big Society* (London: Oxford University Press, 2011), 69-93.

¹⁵ Margaret Brasnett, *The Story of the Citizens' Advice Bureaux* (London: National Council of Social Service, 1964).

¹⁶ Jean Richards, *Inform, Advise and Support: 50 Years of the Citizens Advice Bureau* (Cambridge: Lutterworth Press, 1989).

understandings of professionalism when passing judgment on the volunteers. Furthermore, the disadvantage with institutional accounts such as these is their focus on how institutional arrangements and new ways of working evolved over time creating more effective ways to achieve goals. While useful for documenting institutional innovation and highlighting barriers to change, these accounts are less useful for determining the nature of the CAB's relationship with broader socio-political change.¹⁷

Political scientists have analyzed the role of voluntary organizations in the political process, noting their importance in political socialization and their role as pressure groups. Work on pressure group lobbying and advocacy treats pressure groups as the organized articulation of a particular interest, such as business, labour or manufacturers; or as the 'public interest' broadly defined.¹⁸ The campaigns of voluntary organizations, as Matthew Hilton points out, are often unrelated to the material interests of their membership, a view which the history of the CAB would support.¹⁹

Social historians have focused on voluntarism, and here the debates have been rooted in the nineteenth-century philanthropic tradition, local government, and welfare provision, particularly in areas such as public health, education, moral reform, and social deprivation experienced by marginal groups such as women and children. For Frank Prochaska, the focus is on charity, the religious inspiration for much voluntary activity, and the decline of the philanthropic spirit when the government stepped in,

¹⁷ Another institutional account can be found in the Report of the Lovelock Committee, appointed by the then Minister for Consumer Affairs, Dr Gerald Vaughan in April 1983 to investigate the efficiency of the CAB, and claims by the then government that it had become too overly concerned with its campaigning role, at the expense of its service delivery role. *Review of the National Association of Citizens Advice Bureaux* (1983/84 Cmnd. 9139).

¹⁸ Craig J. Jenkins, 'Non Profit Organizations and Political Advocacy' in Walter Powell and Richard Steinberg, *The Non Profit Sector: A Research Handbook* (New Haven, London: Yale University Press, 2006), 307-332.

¹⁹ Matthew Hilton, 'Politics is Ordinary: Non-governmental Organizations and Political Participation in Contemporary Britain, *Twentieth Century British History* 22/2 (2012) 230-268.

particularly after 1945 and the expansion of the welfare state.²⁰ More recent historiography in this tradition has tended to focus on the importance of the growing voluntary sector's relationship with the state, reflecting recent attempts by the Labour governments of 1997-2010 to encourage greater collaboration between the two.²¹

Other historians and social scientists have utilized theories of 'new social movements' to explore groups including voluntary organizations. This approach has focused on the politics and social networks that gave rise to 'movements' associated with feminism, environmentalism, peace and civil or human rights.²² Another focus of this approach has been on social movements and organizations as an alternative to traditional politics. This assumes that a new kind of politics has focused on a 'post-materialist' politics rather than on party politics.²³

It is also essential to consider the work of historians of citizenship and civil society in Britain. Perhaps the most influential account of the rise of the welfare state as expressing social rights came in a 1949 lecture and essay by the sociologist T. H. Marshall. In the lecture and essay, 'Citizenship and social class', Marshall argued that the state's responsibilities to its citizens had evolved from ensuring civil rights in the eighteenth century to political rights in the nineteenth and social rights in the twentieth. For Marshall, social rights meant the right to 'share to the full in the social heritage and to live the life of a civilized being according to the standards prevailing in

²⁰ Frank Prochaska, *Christianity and Social Service in Modern Britain: The Disinherited Spirit* (Oxford, Oxford University Press, 2006)

²¹ Geoffrey Finlayson, *Citizen, State and Social Welfare in Britain, 1830-1990* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1990); David Fraser, *The Evolution of the British Welfare State: A History of Social Policy since the Industrial Revolution* (3rd Edn Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2003); Nicholas Deakin, *In Search of Civil Society* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2001); Jeremy Kendall and M. R. J. Knapp *The Voluntary Sector in the UK* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1996); J. Kendall, *The Voluntary Sector: Comparative Perspectives in the UK* (London: Routledge, 2003); Nicholas Deakin, 'The Perils of Partnership: The Voluntary Sector and the State, 1945-1992' in J. Davis Smith et al., eds., *An Introduction to the Voluntary Sector* (London, 1995), 40-65; Geoffrey Finlayson, 'A Moving Frontier: Voluntarism and the State in British Social Welfare', *Twentieth Century British History*, 1 (1990), 183-206.

²² Frank Parkin, *Middle Class Radicalism: the Social bases of the British Campaign for Nuclear Disarmament* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1968).

²³ Ronald Inglehart, *Modernization and Postmodernization: Cultural, Economic and Political Change in 43 Societies* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1997).

the society.’²⁴ Marshall’s lecture coincided with the end of the Poor Law in 1948, which signalled the end of the philosophy of welfare that perceived it as a residual activity aimed at the poor only. The post-war welfare state, therefore, represented for Marshall the realization of full citizenship for all.

The concept of ‘civil society’ largely disappeared from political discourse in Britain for much of the twentieth century. However it resurfaced through the work of German sociologists, Jurgen Habermas, and Ralph Darendorf.²⁵ British historians meanwhile, such as Jose Harris, have also begun to explore the concept of civil society in the context of British history.²⁶

1.4. Methodology and sources

The research project outlined here will use the records of the National Council of Social Service (held in the London Metropolitan Archive), and some of its subsidiary bodies. The latter include the Citizens’ Advice Bureaux and the London Council of Social Service (founded in 1938 and 1910 respectively, and also with records in the London Metropolitan Archives). As previous historians have noted, it is impossible to speak comfortably about the whole voluntary sector: ‘a loose and baggy monsters’, as it has been referred to.²⁷ Instead the aim of this thesis was to study an organization that reflects the breadth and diversity of voluntary organizations; their functions as service providers, co-ordinators, advocates, informers, advisors, counsellors and as vehicles for self-help; and the issues which they have addressed historically, namely social care, inequality and poverty, discrimination and prejudice, ill-health, and rehabilitation.

The London Metropolitan Archives (LMA) contains material on CAB in a variety of different holdings. The first source is the records of the National Council of Social

²⁴ T. H. Marshall, *Citizenship and Social Class: And Other Essays*. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1950,) 72

²⁵ Ralf Dahrendorf, *Society and Democracy in Germany* (New York & London: W. W. Norton & Company 1967); and Jürgen Habermas, *The Structural Transformation of the Public Sphere*, (Cambridge, Policy, trans 1989).

²⁶ José Harris, ed. *Civil Society in British History: Ideas, Identities, Institutions* (Oxford: OUP, 2003) and Frank Trentmann, *Free Trade Nation: Commerce, Consumption, and Civil Society in Modern Britain* (Oxford: OUP, 2008).

²⁷ J. Kendall and M. Knapp, ‘A Loose and Baggy Monster: Boundaries, Definitions and Typologies’, in J. D. Smith et al., eds, *An Introduction to the Voluntary Sector* (London: Routledge, 1995).

Service; the CAB developed from the NCSS following discussions in 1938. The NCSS approached the government with plans for information service in order that voluntary organizations and the government could understand the problems and anxieties people might face due to the upcoming war. Material on the CAB is contained in Executive Committee minutes and in separate files within the NCSS collection. There is also material on the sub-committee established to consider the question of legal aid. The LMA also holds the records of the Charity Organization Society (COS), (renamed the Family Welfare Association [FWA] in 1946). The COS played an important part in setting up Citizens' Advice Bureaux. The London Council of Social Service (LCSS) and the COS established some 80 bureaux in London by the outbreak of war in 1939. Records are held of the CAB committee of the COS/FWA. There are statistics on the enquiries brought to bureaux, but there is not continuous series of data.²⁸

In London, local Citizens Advice Bureaux grew out of the London Council of Social Service (LCSS), whose records are also kept in the LMA. The archive includes records of the London Citizens' Advice Bureaux Regional Advisory Committee. Citizens Advice Bureaux in Hampstead, Kentish Town, King's Cross and Swiss Cottage are kept at Camden Local Studies and Archives Centre. Records of bureaux in Lewes, Hove, Brighton, Peacehaven and Sussex County are kept at the East Sussex Record Office. Gloucestershire and Lancaster Community Council hold records. Toynbee Hall kept a minute book for its CAB, which is kept at the LMA.

Un-catalogued central CAB records are held at the LMA. Files exist for each bureau, including papers relating to the formation of each bureau and its recognition or registration by the National CAB Council. There is also correspondence relating to services provided for all bureaux from NCSS and advice sought by bureaux on their own organization. The holding contains subject files including records of the meetings of the National CAB Council and its committees, correspondence between local offices

²⁸ LMA AC 73/46/66; 67; 68; 69; 70; Statistical Abstracts, 1942-59; NCABC Annual Reports 1962; 1964. CAB statistics are difficult to locate and there are some gaps. The statistics shown here are those actually recorded by individual bureaux. Only 50 per cent of bureaux made statistical returns. In its official documents, the National CAB Committee used the average from those bureaux returning statistics, and multiplied this figure by the total number of bureaux in existence at any one time to factor in those bureaux not making any statistical returns.

and many other organizations, including government departments, consumer, welfare and legal organizations and the national and local press, and matters of concern to the CAB service as a whole, such as the training of bureaux staff and the provision of national publicity.

Yet another set of records are kept by the headquarters of the CAB, in Myddleton House, London. These include internal committee records, minutes and agendas maintained from 1957 Council meetings onwards; general correspondence from 1960; minutes and agendas of the Constitution Committee, and 1973-80; minutes and agendas of the Executive Committee from 1971. Annual Reports for the period 1959-78 are also available, along with an extensive series of financial records, policy and development papers, evidence papers and representations to Government. Unfortunately, despite extended correspondence with the company secretary, it has not been possible to use these files. They cover thousands of boxes of material which is not yet available for researchers. It is stored off site and is un-catalogued.²⁹

Finally, the archive of the London School of Economics and Political Science holds un-catalogued papers of the charity worker and social campaigner, Audrey Harvey. After study at Oxford, and helping serve burnt lentil soup to out-of-work actors at the Dick Shepherd Centre, and a brief period of work in publishing for Andre Deutsch, Harvey worked as an adviser in the Poplar Citizens Advice Bureaux. In 1969 she left to join the Child Poverty Action Group, and set up the Citizens' Rights Office, or 'CAB with teeth.'³⁰ Other archives of interest include the Nuffield College Archive, which contains information on the need for post-war information services as part of the Social Reconstruction Survey.

It is important to consider the files of the NCSS, for it created the CAB during wartime. The NCSS had an umbrella function which enabled it to take a strategic overview of policy issues affecting the voluntary sector. Among other things, it served as a resource and co-ordinating organization and acted as a central catalyst and

²⁹ Email correspondence with Jo Hampton, CAB company secretary, 23 February 2010. The costs associated with accessing these boxes and files to review are considerable. The CAB are considering the issue of filing records off-site and the Facilities team are currently looking into alternate cheaper storage companies.

³⁰ 'The rise and fall of welfare rights', *New Society* 14 September 1978, 558-560.

repository of expertise, information, and research on specialist subjects. The NCSS, as David Owen suggests, represents 'the corpus of British voluntary effort'.³¹ It also provided services to a wide range of social groups including older people, community groups, disabled people, families with problems and immigrants.

Evidence of voluntary organizations operating on a local level can be found in the archives of the London Council of Social Service (LCSS). The LCSS was founded in 1910, largely replicating the work of the NCSS on a local level. Its core activity was servicing, supporting and promoting local Councils of Social Service in the Metropolitan boroughs. The LCSS was split into departments, each having an advisory committee: the Information department, the London Churches Group, the Community Development Department, Citizens' Advice Bureaux, the Family Services Department, and the Greater London Standing Council of Voluntary Youth Organizations. The records of the LCSS consist of committee minutes, correspondence files and publications.

There was a sizeable amount of government activity regarding voluntary organizations in the 1950s and 1960s. Important legislation and government-led initiatives included the Nathan Committee (on the law relating to charitable trusts, 1952) the Younghusband Committee (on the training of social workers, 1959), and the 1960 Charities Act. The background to these initiatives is considered through the use of official records held at The National Archives in Kew, London. An important trend in post-war politics has been the increasing relevance and influence of think-tanks and pressure groups on policy decisions. The records of these new policy networks are considered through the reports and publications of non-state actors, such as Political and Economic Planning.

One potential problem during the research has been the question of confidentiality regarding case files when researching the files of charitable organizations. In many cases such files contain highly personal information. Care was taken to adhere to any policies outlined by archives and organizations surrounding the use of their material. Another important problem is the size of the CAB, and problems concerning

³¹ David Owen, *English Philanthropy 1660-1960* (Mass. Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1964).

generalisations of its work and mode of operation. For every bureau that was run professionally by paid social workers, there was one run by an octogenarian priest or local eccentric. This situation continued until the 1970s when state financing finally allowed the central headquarters to begin the process of stamping out such irregularities.

Another related problem is that of geographical coverage. The thesis does not pretend to cover the situation in Wales or Scotland and the focus is very much on England.³² Furthermore there is no clear explanation for the distribution of individual bureaux. The situation in Scotland and Wales are only mentioned briefly, and for the purposes of comparison with the situation in England. Furthermore, most of the examples cited of CAB activity come from London and the South East of England. It is difficult to say for sure whether this was due to the fact that trade union and co-operative welfare movements performing similar functions were more extensive in the north, or whether there was a stronger dislike of middle-class 'charity'. One important factor is that the removal of CAB travelling officers from the north in the 1940s and 50s due to financial constraints. It was their job to ensure that bureaux in the north were visited and reports made to central headquarters. These officers were the only connection with the rest of the country. The situation in the London CAB service has always remained separate from the affairs of the rest of the country. Similarly there has traditionally been a divide between those bureaux operating in urban centres and those in rural areas. Regretfully, it has not been possible to produce a graph or diagram of national and local distribution of and support for CABx over the course of the period as the required data and sources do not exist. Complete lists of bureaux in operation are very few and far between.

This thesis, through the study of the CAB is intended as an historical case study. One potential weaknesses of the case-study approach is the tendency to make overarching claims based on the findings of one organization, or specific event. Although the CAB made strong and often substantiated claims to its own uniqueness, it often merged with other forms of voluntary action through its links with other voluntary

³² This is due to the almost complete lack of source material originating from Scotland or Wales.

organizations. Many of its workers were volunteers in other organizations and were engaged in a great deal of social action more widely. It has been necessary to consider whether the CAB was typical or atypical of voluntary organizations during this time. Equally, the records of the CAB tend to reflect the views of the leaders of the organization, and of individual bureaux, and also of paid workers and travelling officers as it was these groups who did the majority of the corresponding with headquarters. Consequently, I have tried to avoid uncritical reliance on these sources during my research.

2. Planning for an emergency, 1938-1939

2.1. Introduction

This chapter charts the general inter-war background to the formation of the CAB before moving on to discuss its origins as part of the preparation plans made between the government and voluntary organizations for the perceived social disruption of wartime. After outlining the initial decision to set up the service, this chapter charts the roots of the organization in inter-war debates surrounding the arrival of mass democracy and the growth of the welfare state. It charts the establishment of the CAB and its progress and operations during the early months of the war, when social disruption was at its greatest. The first section of this chapter explores the CAB's founding aims and the means by which it would achieve them, as well as the immediate and the long-term background to its establishment.

The idea for an information and advice service for 'John Citizen', as we shall see, was not new. The social administrator F. G. D'Aeth first mooted the idea of a Citizens' Advice Centre as far back as the First World War.¹ Democratic and pluralist concerns over the inter-war growth of the state provided much of the impetus behind discussions surrounding the need for independent advice and information services on the rights and duties of citizenship and state social services. These anxieties for the health of democracy combined with the similar concerns regarding the spectre of a massively expanded wartime state.

A second section explores the command structure of the organization, including its hierarchy of command and the social networks in which its leadership operated. It explores how decision making was implemented, as well the language, ethics and key beliefs deployed during the planning stages. The third section considers the CAB's relationship with its environment through its individual organizations, including most importantly, the state, through exploring the relationship between the CAB and key opinion formers. It considers the extent to which the immediate environment was hostile or receptive to a voluntary social service providing information and advice

¹ Geoffrey Finlayson, *Citizen, state, and Social Welfare in Britain, 1830-1990* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1994), 275.

(sometimes legal advice) on key social problems. A final section considers the significance of the CAB's work, for individual enquirers, for the government, and for the volunteers in the context of Britain's pre-war plans. These are compared with the claims made for the voluntary sector and its advantages and disadvantages in contemporary discourse.

The chapter explores the political environment in which the CAB was created, as well as the resources that were available to it. It also considers the nature of the democratic arguments employed by the CAB's creators for the need for sources of information and advice on civic matters and other issues of citizenship. It also discusses the nature of social work between the two world wars, a period which saw the gradual development of a notion of partnership between statutory and voluntary welfare services.² It asks why the Citizens Advice Bureau was set up in 1938 specifically and not at an earlier or later date. It considers the demand for information and advice services between the wars and considers why it was deemed necessary to set up such services with the outbreak of war. It discusses why the CAB was structured as it was, its background and resources, relations with its environment and the outcomes for users.

Research on the early history of the CAB is complicated by the relative scarcity of central records. Writing in the 1970s, Raymond Wadsworth, Chairman of the Birmingham Citizens Advice Bureau Committee, commented that in the early days of war, records were considered by workers and organizers to be of little importance. In a tone almost nostalgic for the conditions of wartime, he commented that, so long as people got on with the job, there was little thought of recording the deliberations of an ad hoc committee or the discussions of a meeting to hear the latest information or discuss how mutual assistance could be improved or new ideas disseminated between bureaux.³ The history of the establishment of the CAB is best followed through the records of the organization responsible for co-ordinating its birth, as well as through the records of Whitehall departments. In particular, the discussions between the Ministry of Health and the National Council of Social Service that led to the creation of

² Jane Lewis, *The Voluntary Sector, the State and Social Work in Britain: The Charity Organization Society/Family Welfare Association since 1869* (Aldershot: 1995).

³ Margaret Brasnett, *Voluntary Social Action: A History of the National Council of Social Service* (London: National Council of Social Service, 1969).

the bureau service highlight the nature of the relationship between civil society and the state in the process of wartime planning.

These questions are relevant to historical arguments concerning the development of voluntary organizations in Britain. Previous accounts of the CAB's history have stressed the novelty of the work it undertook.⁴ These accounts continued to feed the perception of voluntary organizations acting as pioneers in methods of social advance. The goals of the CAB, while showing some continuity with the aims and goals of social casework bodies and other organizations concerned with distributing advice and information, also signalled a new outlet for voluntary social service. Geoffrey Finlayson and others have stressed the importance of notions of partnership between voluntary and statutory welfare services during wartime.⁵ However, little has been said of the evolving nature of that partnership. James Hinton's study of the Women's Voluntary Service (WVS) exaggerates the semi-dictatorial nature of this organization's structure, reflecting the organization's creation at the behest of the government. CAB was more concerned with maintaining its independence, something Lady Reading of the WVS would have deemed secondary to the tasks it was asked to carry out.⁶ CAB wished to be in dialogue with the state, not merely to support it.

Meanwhile histories of the wartime British state have emphasised the importance of voluntary organizations in their service role. Richard Titmuss, in his *Problems of Social Policy*, pointed out their continuing importance in wartime.⁷ Recent research has shown how during the Second World War the Ministry of Health and the National Council for the Unmarried Mother and Child were both eager to encourage cooperation between public and voluntary sectors to improve standards and increase places in mother and baby homes.⁸

⁴ Margaret Brasnett, *The Story of the Citizens' Advice Bureaux* (London: National Council of Social Service, 1964), 2.

⁵ Geoffrey Finlayson, *Citizen, state, and Social Welfare in Britain, 1830-1990* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1994).

⁶ James Hinton, *Women, Social Leadership, and the Second World War: Continuities of Class* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2002).

⁷ Richard Titmuss, *Problems of Social Policy* (London: HMSO, 1950).

⁸ Pat Thane and Tanya Evans, *Sinners? Scroungers? Saints? Unmarried Motherhood in Twentieth-Century England* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012) 54-82.

In terms of the outcomes for society and for specific individuals, these questions are important for the light they shine on understandings of wartime politics and civil society. The debates around the creation of the CAB highlight a widespread concern with the importance of public relations in a mass democracy. The creators of the CAB, repeatedly expressed concern for the individual citizen, bewildered, and potentially ignored by the spectre of the monolithic wartime state. Equally, the founders of the organization expressed great concern that the social casualties of wartime could best be treated by the wartime state in partnership with voluntary organizations.

2.2. Aims and principles of a wartime information service

The Citizens Advice Bureaux (CAB) was created by leading social workers in conjunction with the National Council of Social Service (NCSS), following the Munich crisis in the autumn of 1938. Following the crisis, a number of voluntary organizations were invited to attend a standing conference under the auspices of the NCSS, whose intention was to coordinate the contributions of voluntary organizations towards defence. In January 1939, the Standing Conference of Voluntary Organizations in Wartime appointed five sub-committees, including a Personal Service Group, whose task was to consider the possible nature of social case work during wartime, and the personal problems that might arise under wartime conditions. Under this sub-committee the idea for an 'Information Bureaux which in time of war would provide advice on all kinds of problems giving rise to anxiety and distress in the community', first originated.⁹ Serious efforts at planning were put on hold until March 1939 when early proposals for 'Citizen's Information Bureaux', were discussed in a meeting between the NCSS and Sir John Anderson, Lord Privy Seal. In April 1939, a draft memorandum by the NCSS suggested that a service of 'Bureau for Advice and Help' would give information alongside offers of practical help to those adversely affected by the extreme disruptions of wartime.¹⁰

In the earliest stages of planning by the NCSS, and during the first few months of war, it was envisaged that each individual bureau, located around the country, would serve as a clearing house, helping individuals whose needs could not be helped by

⁹ LMA 4016/IS/A/04/126(1), Voluntary Social Service Organizations in time of War, Executive Committee, 15 March 1939

¹⁰ TNA CAB 102/743, Draft memorandum of bureaux for advice and help, 18 April 1939

government offices dealing with air raid precautions, food control, or evacuation. Bureaux would help bombed out families in need of immediate accommodation, and mothers who wished to visit evacuated children or with aged parents to look after. Other special cases might include, for example, people with special diets applying to the Food Control Office. In July 1939 a statement was prepared by the NCSS as a result of the discussions taking place within the Standing Conference of Voluntary Organizations, which further set out the goals of the organization. The function of the bureaux would be to provide explanations and instructions in matters which could not be dealt with in a routine way:

It would serve as a clearing house for enquiries, referring individuals to the appropriate statutory or voluntary agency, and when necessary following up the more complex cases involving collaboration between different organizations. In addition there are bound to be personal problems which no existing organization can meet, and it will be necessary for the bureau to consider how these cases can be assisted.¹¹

The subjects on which bureaux would be expected to be able to answer questions included peace-time social services possibly operating in a modified form in wartime; including questions involving National Health and Unemployment Insurance, Old Age Pensions, housing difficulties, special provision for the blind, deaf and people suffering from tuberculosis. Second, bureaux were expected to be able to handle social problems peculiar to wartime conditions or involving a combination of normal and war difficulties. Consequently, it was envisaged that workers would be able to provide advice about such problems as: hostel and lodging accommodation for workers transferred from other parts of the country; canteens, clubs and other social facilities available for people of all ages and both sexes; the provision made by central and local authorities for the prevention and relief of distress, together with the auxiliary services available from voluntary societies for the same purpose.¹²

¹¹ The National Archive (TNA) CAB 102/743, Citizens' Advice Bureaux: A Service of Advice and Help in Time of War, memo July 1939, 2-3.

¹² TNA CAB 102/743, Citizens' Advice Bureaux: A Service of Advice and Help in Time of War, memo July 1939, 2-3.

Before considering these objectives in detail, it is necessary to place them in their historical context by exploring and discussing the long-term background as well as the short-term energizing events of 1938-1939. Services of the kind delivered by the CAB had been rendered for many years before the Second World War by some Trade Unions and local branches of political parties. The First World War saw a significant expansion of the state and the growth of new corporatist activities. In 1924, a report of the Inter-departmental Committee on Administration of Public Assistance recommended the creation of an information service, commenting that 'much avoidable dissatisfaction with the working of the public assistance services is due largely to the ignorance of the average citizen'.¹³ Social work commentators continued to emphasise the need for some kind of liaison officer between the citizen and the expanding, and increasingly complex, social services.¹⁴ The background to these calls for information services reflected a number of inter-war developments, including the growth of the state, broadly defined, as well as the growth of the social services in particular. Alongside these developments, political concerns over the development of large-scale organization and bureaucracy, as well as the enlargement of the franchise acted as further impetus to these debates.

Another reason was the growth in scale of the social services. The inter-war years saw the growth of the state as politicians gradually came to accept the state's responsibility to provide social services. Despite factors limiting the extent of state intervention, such as the economic slump and unemployment, there was a steady expansion of social services. Similarly there was a growth in voluntary organizations. The parent of the CAB, the National Council of Social Service, was itself set up in 1919 to further co-ordination and cooperation between the state and voluntary sources of social welfare. Unemployment Insurance Acts of 1920 and 1927 extended the insurance scheme to cover most workers, with the exception of agricultural labourers, domestic servants

¹³ *Report of the Inter-Departmental Committee on the Co-Ordination of Administrative and Executive Arrangements for the Grant of Assistance from Public Funds on Account of Sickness, Destitution, and Unemployment* (Public Assistance) (1924; Cmd 2011), 63.

¹⁴ See Constance Braithwaite, *The Voluntary Citizen: An Enquiry into the Place of Philanthropy in the Community* (London: Methuen & Co, 1938); and Elizabeth Macadam, *The New Philanthropy: A Study of the Relations Between the Statutory and Voluntary Social Services* (London: George Allen & Unwin, 1934).

and the self-employed. The 1934 Unemployment Act introduced a new scheme distinguishing between insurance and assistance, paid by a new Unemployment Assistance Board. In 1936 agricultural workers were insured for the first time. The 1925 Widow's, Orphan's and Old Age Contributory Pensions Act was another important development in the social services. The state had largely accepted some responsibility for maintenance of the sick and unemployed. This growth in public welfare was accompanied by an expansion in health and education services.

However, the often piecemeal nature of the development of the state during the first half of the twentieth century prompted questions about how best to plan social services and the economy for maximum impact and efficiency. Beginning with the economic crisis of the 1931 and continuing through the 1930s, there was considerable social and political agreement on the importance of central economic planning.¹⁵ The perceived inaction of political leaders led to the development of a number of groups who focused on the importance of planning, such as Political and Economic Planning (P.E.P.). In 1937 P.E.P. conducted its own survey of the British Social Services. With a greater focus on planning came greater centralisation of and bureaucratisation of welfare. For example, the 1929 Local Government Act centralised local authority welfare provision, while the Unemployment Act of 1934 brought most of forms of support for the unemployed under central control of the Unemployment Assistance Board. Individuals became reliant on the discretion of centralised welfare offices for the payment of benefit.¹⁶

With planning came greater centralization and claims about the bureaucratization of welfare and everyday life. As more groups were brought into the remit of statutory welfare services, so the complexity of these services increased. One factor contributing to greater complexity was the continued importance of the means test; by 1939 there were at least eighteen separate means tests standing between the poor and the relief available from central or local government.¹⁷ A corollary of the development of large-

¹⁵ Arthur Marwick, 'Middle Opinion in the Thirties: Planning, Progress and Political 'Agreement'', *The English Historical Review*, 79/311 (1964) 285-298.

¹⁶ David Vincent, *Poor Citizens: The State and the Poor in Twentieth-Century Britain* (London: Longman, 1991).

¹⁷ *Ibid.* 79.

scale organizations through planning was the potential threat to the individual's ability to find his or her way through the maze of legislation and organization. In these debates, advice and information held a significant role within liberal notions of citizenship.

The growth in size and complexity of the corporatist state was accompanied by the increasing importance of the expert as an advisor in many aspects of social and economic life in Britain. The precise role of those with specialized knowledge in a modern democracy remained unresolved. One important consideration for planners, therefore, was how best to integrate the technocratic and scientific expert as well as the lay person with the wider democratic community. The social services in particular were one area where the gap between the individual and expert was thought to be increasing.¹⁸ For Harold Laski, 'the day of the plain man' had passed, and it was only the juxtaposition of the statesman between the expert and the public which made specialist conclusions capable of application.¹⁹ For the American philosopher and progressive thinker, John Dewey, the answer lay in the belief that certain professions such as doctors, social scientists, teachers and journalists should serve as catalysts for a more civic environment. In *The Public and Its Problems*, written in 1927, Dewey wrote that the goal for contemporary democracy was to discover the means by which a scattered public could recognize and define its interests. In order to achieve this goal, professionals should act as intermediaries between a fragmented and under informed public and a distant and increasingly complex political system. Dewey's democratic professionals were to provide analyses and information, encourage reflection about large-scale economic and political events, and most important, encourage self-recognition on the part of publics formed around social problems.²⁰

With the gap between the average man and the expert perceived as widening by those across the political spectrum, one solution was sought in the growth of public relations. An important contextual factor to the planning and creation of a 'Citizen's advice service', were interwar conceptions of citizenship. Following the 1918 Reform Act, the

¹⁸ Thomas S. Simey, *Principles of Social Administration* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1937), 13.

¹⁹ Harold Laski, *The Limitations of the Expert* (London: The Fabian Society, 1931) 10.

²⁰ John Dewey, *The Public and its Problems* (London: George Allen & Unwin, 1927).

period between the wars saw attempts by political parties and voluntary associations to educate the newly enfranchised in the rights and duties of citizenship in a mass democracy. This period saw the expansion of new kinds of civic organization, often secular in character, strongly invested in a discourse of active citizenship.²¹ In the context of state growth, government relations became key to sustaining notions of citizenship in a mass democracy, as Abigail Beach has highlighted.²² Large-scale organization and modern bureaucratic methods across civil society were viewed by a number of political groups as potentially dangerous to liberal democracy in Britain. The think tank Political and Economic Planning (P.E.P.) argued through the 1930s for greater government publicity in order to overcome 'the wide prejudices which still exist against bureaucratic methods.'²³

²¹ Helen McCarthy, 'Voluntary Associations and Democratic Politics in Inter-war Britain', *The Historical Journal*, 5/4 (2007), 891-912.

²² Abigail L. Beach, 'The Labour Party and the Idea of Citizenship, c.1931-1951', unpublished PhD thesis (University College London, University of London, 1996).

²³ 'Government public relations', *Planning: A Broadsheet Issued by Political and Economic Planning (PEP)* 1/14 (1933), 10.

2.3. Structure and resources

The CAB service was planned by national organizations already concerned with peace-time personal service and relief work. The rapid expansion of the Bureaux reflected the effective cooperation between the national organizations and their local branches. For example, in London, the 125 bureaux were organized jointly by the London Council of Social Service and the Charity Organization Society. In Birmingham, the Birmingham Citizens' Society organized 38 bureaux. In Liverpool the service was organized jointly by the Liverpool Council of Social Service and the Liverpool Personal Service Society; and on Tyneside by the Tyneside Council of Social Service. The National Council of Social Service provided information on new legislation and answers to difficult questions received by the Bureaux. The twelve Regional Officers of the NCSS were charged with extending the service in those parts of the country where it was most required.

There was a large element of supervisory control emanating from the central headquarters. The CAB was a service designed and created by social workers, and it was assumed that social workers would fill most of the leadership roles within the organization. Leadership had to come from trained social workers; otherwise the CAB would lose its effectiveness. 'For a service of this kind, a nucleus of professional social workers to give skilled direction is absolutely essential'.²⁴ Furthermore, the majority of bureaux, it was argued by the NCSS, would require skilled direction. The quality of individual bureaux would, it was imagined by the NCSS, be regulated from the centre and standards strictly enforced across the country. There seems to have been little discussion about how this was to be achieved in the planning stages.

The people responsible for planning the CAB were drawn from across the political parties. Sir Wyndham Deedes was chair of the Personal Service Group set up in 1938 by the NCSS Executive Committee to organize the bureau service. A former army officer, civil administrator and long term social worker; Deedes was profoundly influenced by reading the Webbs' *Prevention of Destitution* in 1911. From 1923, after resigning from the army, Deedes worked in University House Settlement Bethnal

²⁴ TNA T 161/1221, Voluntary Social Service Organizations in Times of War, Citizens' Advice Bureaux Finance Memorandum to H.M. Government, 25 September 1939.

Green for the rest of his life, working tirelessly for the NCSS and London Council of Social Service. He became a chief air-raid warden for the borough in 1939 and in 1941 a Labour member of the London County Council for North-East Bethnal Green, until 1946.²⁵

The first chairman of the Central CAB Committee was Ronald Norman, brother of the Governor of the Bank of England, Montague Norman. A former chairman of the BBC and London County Council, he served with distinction on a number of public bodies. Lending distinction to his work was his aristocratic appearance however he was, through his work at the BBC, keen to support the director-general and the permanent staff, 'the professionals'. He was a Conservative in politics, and was involved as a councillor and then alderman in London County Council politics from 1907 to 1934. As well as serving as vice-chairman of the National Trust from 1924 to 1948 he was vice president of the NCSS.²⁶ Dorothy Keeling was effectively the first national organizer of the bureau. After some experience with workhouse visiting, in 1907 she joined the staff of the Bradford Guild of Help. In 1918 she was hired as the first secretary of the newly established personal services committee of the Liverpool Personal Services Society, a leader in the development of family casework. Keeling left Liverpool to work more closely with the NCSS on the outbreak of war.²⁷

²⁵ Andrew Chandler, 'Deedes, Sir Wyndham Henry(1883–1956)', *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, Oxford University Press, 2004; online edn, Jan 2011 [<http://0-www.oxforddnb.com.catalogue.ulrls.lon.ac.uk/view/article/32768>, accessed 23 Dec 2011]

²⁶ *The Times*, Obituary, 7 December 1963.

²⁷ Susan Pedersen, 'Keeling, Dorothy Clarissa (1881–1967)', *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, Oxford University Press, 2004 [<http://0-www.oxforddnb.com.catalogue.ulrls.lon.ac.uk/view/article/46438>, accessed 23 Dec 2011]; Keeling, Dorothy Clarrissa (1881-1967), social worker, was born at Grammar School House, Manor Row, Bradford. After some experience with workhouse visiting, in 1907 she joined the staff of the Bradford Guild of Help, founded in 1905. Keeling held the position of honorary assistance secretary for the Guild for ten years. In 1918 she was hired as the first secretary of the newly established personal services committee of the Liverpool Council of voluntary Aid later the Liverpool Personal Services Society, a leader in the development of family casework. Keeling's officially non-partisan but generally progressive leadership strengthened the society's reputation as a leader in the development of family casework and as a reliable resource for those in need of advice and aid. During the Second World War, Keeling left Liverpool to

A final important contribution came from social workers. Two lecturers in social work, Constance Braithwaite and Elizabeth Macadam both argued for greater cooperation between voluntary and statutory social services. In *The New Philanthropy: A Study of the Relations Between the Statutory and Voluntary Social Services*, written in 1934, Macadam argued that new principles were required for charity organization and for councils of social welfare owing to the multiplication of statutory social services. Co-coordinating organizations, she argued, were required in every town in the country, a fact made apparent by the inadequacy of the machinery for distributing welfare in the economic depression of the inter-war period.²⁸

The numbers of people volunteering in the inter-war period were large. It was anticipated that people would continue to volunteer in wartime. The role of the individual volunteer was considered crucial particularly in the context of social work. The social reformer and MP, Eleanor Rathbone, made this exact point during a parliamentary debate over the Midwives Bill in April 1936.²⁹ During her parliamentary speech she quoted Sidney Webb to further emphasize her point:

The Public Authority and the salaried official can only do the work in gross; they are apt to be blunt and obtuse; to have no fingers, but only thumbs ... We need the voluntary worker to be the eyes and fingers of the Public Authority ... as the circumference of Public Authorities is extended the greater becomes the periphery.³⁰

work more closely with the NCSS. Convinced that voluntary workers could help with many of the problems caused by the war, she expanded the number of and scope of the CAB, which had helped to organize under the aegis of the NCSS in 1938. Made an OBE in 1946 for her work with the CAB, Keeling returned to Liverpool at the end of the war. See also *The Times*, 4 April 1967.

²⁸ Elizabeth Macadam, *The New Philanthropy: A Study of the Relations Between the Statutory and Voluntary Social Services* (London: George Allen & Unwin, 1934), 81.

²⁹ Susan Pedersen, 'Rathbone, Eleanor Florence (1872–1946)', *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, Oxford University Press, 2004; online edn, Jan 2011 [<http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/35678>, accessed 23 July 2012]. Pedersen mentions in her article that Eleanor Rathbone helped to found the Citizens Advice Bureau during the Second World War, but I have been unable to find any evidence of this.

³⁰ Hansard, HC (Series 5) Vol. 311, col. 1195 (30 April 1936).

In 1938, Constance Braithwaite emphasised the importance of the volunteer alongside the professional social worker and the public official on account of their being engaged in 'ordinary occupations', for such a person, she argued, was 'more likely to keep in touch with the general public and represent its opinion.'³¹

Crucial to this understanding was the view that the leisured full-time voluntary worker was in decline. In 1934, Elizabeth Macadam, through her writings, attempted to sound the death knell of the leisured whole-time voluntary worker. In considering the likely future supply of voluntary workers, she argued, '... by far the larger number are those who as good citizens are only able to give up part of their leisure to some form of community work. In this class lies the hope of the future.' This represented an attempt to democratise effectively volunteering. Macadam exhibited confidence that, with good organization and trained guidance, thousands of men and women of all classes and all occupations, would be involved in voluntary service in the community. Moreover, these men and women would, she suggested, 'contribute freshness and energy and experience born of personal contacts, sometimes absent in the more professional worker.'³²

Also the character of the voluntary CAB worker was expected to be of great importance: 'The effectiveness of the bureau would depend upon the number, the ability and the experience of the staff.'³³ Staff, planners suggested, would have to be familiar with their neighbourhood; be able to explain rules and regulations in the simplest language; know of the work of statutory authorities in their areas; and be in close touch with the principal voluntary societies. To this end, it was imagined that one full time person, experienced in family case-work, would be in charge of each Bureau, assisted by part-time helpers possibly working by rota.³⁴ Moreover, the recruitment and training of a skeleton staff would have to be undertaken in advance. The importance of securing workers with previous experience or training in personal

³¹ See Constance Braithwaite, *The Voluntary Citizen: An Enquiry into the Place of Philanthropy in the Community* (London: Methuen & Co, 1938), 57.

³² Elizabeth Macadam, *The New Philanthropy: A Study of the Relations Between the Statutory and Voluntary Social Services* (London: George Allen & Unwin, 1934), 301.

³³ TNA CAB 102/743, Citizens Advice Bureaux: A Service of Advice and Help in Time of War, July 1939, 5.

³⁴ Ibid.

service work was stressed, as was the possibility of recruitment of volunteers through existing organizations such as Toc H, Rotary Clubs, and other social service organizations. Workers should, the NCSS suggested, include people of both sexes and a variety of experience.³⁵ The importance of preliminary or refresher courses in social work was also emphasised, both for those undertaking highly specialised work and for those carrying out some more straightforward duties. Finally, the planners of the CAB argued that the success of the Bureaux would depend on their abilities to enlist, 'a group of responsible workers whose zeal and ability will command the confidence of the public.'³⁶

The creators of the service imagined that each of the CAB's goals would be carried out in accordance with a number of guiding principles. First, each CAB was to be organized, 'by a community for a community'. The structure of the CAB reflected inter-war trends towards corporatist planning within theories of public administration. Corporatist planning can be defined as a system of representation in which voluntary associations were organized into hierarchically ordered and functionally differentiated categories, created by the state. In exchange, voluntary organizations would observe certain controls.³⁷ Yet planners also advocated a decentralised organization. Decision-making was devolved to individual bureaux. Each bureau, it was envisaged, would be autonomous and would work in close connection with the statutory authorities and other voluntary bodies. To this end, a representative management committee would conduct the business of each bureau. In some places this might mean working under the auspices of a pre-existing Council of Social Service or casework agency. Each committee operating each bureau would consist of representatives of statutory authorities, voluntary organizations, social workers and local authorities. Businesses, political parties, and the churches would all be represented on the committee, as well as voluntary workers. Above each local CAB, regional and county committees would

³⁵ TNA CAB 102/743, Principles of the Citizens Advice Bureaux Service, 22 January 1941.

³⁶ TNA CAB 102/743, Citizens Advice Bureaux: A Service of Advice and Help in Time of War, July 1939 6.

³⁷ For a useful discussion of corporatism in the British context see Helen McCarthy and Pat Thane, 'The politics of association in industrial society', *Twentieth Century British History* 22, 2 (2011), 217-29.

advise on questions of policy and organization and assist in organising training courses, as well as maintaining and improving the quality of the work. Related to the need for a representative committee was the principle of non-partisanship. Every effort was to be made to secure premises that were not associated with any political party or religious sect.³⁸

The principle of non-partisanship was held as vital to the success of the CAB service. Ross McKibbin argues that the tradition of non-partisanship in British political culture between the wars formed the basis of an anti-socialist consensus. More recently Helen McCarthy has argued with reference to the League of Nations Union, for the continuing importance of non-partisan values within centrist politics. Voluntary organizations between 1918 and 1939 were keen to disassociate themselves from all political parties, and embraced those members and leaders willing to put party allegiances one side. This did not signal a form of non-political conservatism, but rather a liberal attempt to carve out a space separate from party politics. As Bernard Crick has suggested, all ends of the political spectrum could subscribe to views that refuted party politics.³⁹

Another important influence on the structure and form of voluntary organizations and the CAB was the continuing influence of idealist conceptions of politics and state-society relations. Forms of idealist thought reached Britain in the late nineteenth century following the translation of Hegel's *Philosophy of Right* in 1896. The most influential works of the major idealist political philosophers in Britain included T. H. Green's *Lectures on the Principles of Political Obligation* and Bernard Bosanquet's *Philosophical Theory of the state*, first published in 1899. Idealism was notable for its social holism: the idea that the state or society exists as a moral and metaphysical entity in its own right. All must be seen as components of a whole. By bringing together representatives in the same place, through disagreement, a common view would emerge. Such idealist views of politics were relatively commonplace in inter-war Britain. It was imagined that through a process of discussion, the common interest would emerge and be recognised. Free discussion was required at all levels and was

³⁸ TNA CAB 102/743, Principles of the Citizens Advice Bureaux Service, 25 May 1941.

³⁹ Bernard Crick, *In Defence of Politics* (5th edn., London: Continuum, 2000).

essential to the emergence of the common view. Important writers in this tradition included A. D. Lindsay and Sir Ernest Barker. Democratic politics was a means of ensuring that political discussion was not dominated by one group.⁴⁰ Idealism was slowly displaced by the rise of moral and political philosophy influenced by the development of analytic philosophy. This saw a new regard and importance given to the moral importance of the individual and the beginnings of social explanations relying on facts about individuals.

A second guiding principle related to the universal nature of a free, non partisan and non-sectarian advice and information service. The organizers of the CAB service envisaged that it would be used by all members of society: 'the business and professional man and woman, the stranger, the alien, the housewife, the employer and employee, the landlord and tenant, parent and child, rich and poor.'⁴¹ It followed, therefore, that the premises should be central, accessible, cheerful and businesslike. Publicity was deemed especially important, as was the need for opening hours 'convenient to all sections of the community'. Finally, the universal nature of the work meant that it had to be carried out in a spirit of friendship and sympathy. These qualities were deliberately encouraged to distance the voluntary social work of the bureaux from criticisms levelled by social workers, politicians of the left and other group that charity was by its very nature inefficient, piecemeal and badly organized. As Elizabeth Macadam admitted in 1934, many offices of charitable organizations demonstrated 'Long hours, mechanical drudgery, short holidays, overcrowded offices, and struggles with overdrawn balances.'⁴²

Third, in a further bid to distance itself from the image held by critics of charity that it was discriminatory and patronising, CAB were urged to 'dissociate themselves from the giving of any form of relief, either in cash or kind'. The separation of the giving of financial and material assistance, such as clothes or relief, from information was

⁴⁰ See A. D. Lindsay, *Essentials of Democracy* (2nd edn., London: Oxford University Press, 1935), 40-1; and Ernest Barker, *Reflections on Government* (London: Oxford University Press, 1942).

⁴¹ LMA 4016/IS/A/04/029, Citizens Advice Bureaux and relief, 9 December 1940.

⁴² Elizabeth Macadam, *The New Philanthropy: A Study of the Relations Between the Statutory and Voluntary Social Services* (London: George Allen & Unwin, 1934).

important if claims of condescension and patronage were to be avoided, particularly from the Labour Party. All applications for financial and other material help were to be forwarded to the appropriate Relief Society.

Fourth, the financial responsibility for each bureau was to be shared by those in the district that it served. To this end, steps were to be taken to secure the support of the local authority, voluntary subscriptions were to be solicited, and where essential expenses could not fully be met, the Regional Officer of the NCSS should be consulted. Again, this reflected trends in the interwar finance of voluntary organizations. Writing after the Second World War, Constance Braithwaite, a member of staff of the Department of Social Work at Newcastle University, reflected on the growing diversification of voluntary social service finances during the inter-war period. In 1937, of 120 Councils of Social Service or Personal Service Societies, 49 received grants from local authorities, ranging from £600 to £10.⁴³ She also noted the new forms of appeal to the general public for voluntary funds such as flag days, introduced by the Lifeboat Association, and house collections, regulated by the Police since 1916. The Sunday Cinema Entertainments Fund, a levy on profits on the Sunday opening of cinemas, contributed to funds of charities and voluntary organizations under the Sunday Entertainments Act of 1932. Affiliation fees had grown as a proportion of the voluntary funds of charities, during the interwar period, so too had income from payments by the recipients of benefits. Settlements, Community Associations and various clubs made charges for various services. Braithwaite also recognized that legislation since 1918, such as the 1921 Education Act, the 1936 Housing Act and the 1937 Physical Training and Recreation Act, had made it easier for the state to grant aid voluntary organizations. She concluded that charities were receiving a growing proportion of their total receipts in payments for services rendered and that charitable gifts were subsidizing voluntary social services rather than providing the full costs. Finally, there was little evidence that the increase in taxation and the greater provision of social services by public authorities had the effect of decreasing income from legacies and other charitable gifts.

⁴³ Constance Braithwaite, 'The Finance of Voluntary Social Services' in Henry Mess (ed.), *Voluntary Social Services Since 1918* (London: Kegan Paul, 1947), 188-203.

Professionalism was a fifth principle deemed by leaders and organizers to be crucial for the operation of a voluntary service. It was of the utmost importance that the standard of advice given in each bureau should be the highest it was possible to attain. Arising from this principle, headquarters suggested that each bureau should endeavour to call upon the services of as many experts of various kinds as possible; it should enlist the services of a Poor Man's Lawyer; and, its workers should take every possible opportunity of enlarging their knowledge, 'by study, by conference and by all other means within their reach.'⁴⁴ Professionalism would ensure the service would not face criticism from traditional critics of charity on the left, and from civil servants who might view its efforts as muddled and inefficient. It also reflected trends in professionalism in social work, and other related professions such as teaching. In 1935, a civil servant, Miss Zoe L. Puxley at the Ministry of Health, wrote in an essay published in the journal *Public Administration* that a point not sufficiently realized was that so-called voluntary agencies, although dependent on voluntary funds, were usually staffed by paid and highly trained staff.⁴⁵ Young social workers had usually completed two or three years of theoretical and practical work before taking a post as an organizer of a children's care committee, or a secretary in the local office of the Charity Organization Society, or a lady almoner in a hospital. ⁴⁶

Sixth, the success of the bureau depended, argued the CAB headquarters, upon the extent to which it co-operated with other organizations, both public and voluntary, in its area. Close contact should therefore be maintained with the local authority and local representatives of Central Government Departments. In addition, every opportunity should be taken to understand what other voluntary societies were doing. Also, a plan should be worked out to make clear the kind of cases which should be dealt with by the bureau and which should be referred to other bodies. Again they were dealing with criticisms that voluntary organizations were muddled and badly co-ordinated. This

⁴⁴ TNA CAB 102/743, Principles of the Citizens Advice Bureau Service, 25 May 1941.

⁴⁵ Zoe L. Puxley became very active with the National Council for the Unmarried Mother and her Child. See Pat Thane and Tanya Evans, *Sinners? Scroungers? Saints? Unmarried Motherhood in Twentieth-Century England* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012).

⁴⁶ Z. L. Puxley, 'The Use of Voluntary Agencies in Government', in Institute of Public Administration, *Essays on Aspects of Public Administration* (London: Institute of Public Administration, 1935).

reflected a long standing principle underlying the development of scientific organized charity that it should supplement and not replace statutory services. A good example of this in practice was the Children's Care Organization in London. London County Council undertook the organization of meals for children and paid for centres for the treatment of minor ailments, while voluntary members of local Care Committees visited and followed up social cases arising out of medical inspections.⁴⁷

Seventh, and finally, it was urged that each bureau should be sensitive to the needs and reactions of the people in its district, its workers learning from the enquiries which came to them the kind of problems which were causing difficulty, anxiety and distress. It followed that careful record would be kept of the number and nature of enquiries dealt with; that the summary of these enquiries would be sent regularly to headquarters, and, that a bureau should be prepared to promote, or to co-operate with other bodies in promoting such special services as might appear necessary. This principle sought to harness the so-called 'personal touch' that voluntary organizations claimed to hold as an advantage over statutory services.⁴⁸

⁴⁷ Hilda Jennings, *The Private Citizen in Public Social Work: An Account of the Voluntary Children's Care Committee System in London* (London: George Allen and Unwin, 1930).

⁴⁸ Parker Morris, 'The Respective Spheres of Public Authorities and Voluntary Organizations in the Administration of Social Services', *Public Administration*, 5/4 (October 1927), 388.

2.4. External relations

While planning groups were concerned over the piecemeal nature of much of the social reform and economic reforms of the 1930s, organizations making up the voluntary movement continued to debate their own role as providers of welfare alongside the growing statutory welfare services. Despite the growth of collectivism and statutory welfare provision between the wars, alternative forms of welfare provision continued, including private charity.⁴⁹ Crucial to these developments was the gradually evolving concept of 'partnership' between statutory and voluntary social services. This concept shaped the external relations between voluntary organizations and the state between the wars, and would shape the perceptions of the planners of the CAB.

The notion that voluntary organizations could offer different values and services from the state was expressed in two articles in the journal *Public Administration* in 1927, by the Secretary of the National Council of Social Service, Captain L. F. Ellis, and by Parker Morris, Town Clerk of Chesterfield. Morris's article concluded: 'Today there is a serious lack of co-ordination between Public Authorities and Voluntary Associations.'⁵⁰ To this end the Betterton Committee of 1924 had advocated the establishment of more Local Councils of Social Service by the NCSS, consisting of representatives of Voluntary Associations and honorary members of the Statutory Bodies administering public social services.⁵¹ He argued that pioneer and propaganda work should be undertaken by individuals and voluntary bodies, as well as where 'personal service or individuality or variety of treatment is of upmost importance'. There the service was best administered by voluntary bodies supported financially by the state with the minimum of supervision. Conversely, he argued, if the voluntary association could not administer the service efficiently, or if the service could be administered exceptionally conveniently by an existing public authority, or if the service required a limitation of

⁴⁹ Bernard Harris, 'Responding to Adversity: Government-Charity Relations and the Relief of Unemployment in Inter-War Britain', *Contemporary Record*, 9/3 (1995).

⁵⁰ Parker Morris, 'The Respective Spheres of Public Authorities and Voluntary Organizations in the Administration of Social Services', *Public Administration*, 5/4 (October 1927).

⁵¹ *Report of the Inter-Departmental Committee on the Co-Ordination of Administrative and Executive Arrangements for the Grant of Assistance from Public Funds on Account of Sickness, Destitution, and Unemployment (Public Assistance)* (1924; Cmd 2011), 64.

the freedom of the subject, then the state should undertake the administration of the service.⁵²

Captain Ellis went into more detail. The characteristics of voluntary service, he argued, resulted from its grounding in moral values. As it was born of conviction and sustained by enthusiasm, voluntary service was free from all restraint. Finally it was missionary in character and individual in essence. Yet Ellis recognised its weaknesses: 'It is inevitable sporadic, unequal in quality and unstable; and it suffers commonly from inadequate equipment.' By contrast, the statutory service was born of authority and sustained by law; conditioned by statute and regulations and could only be adjusted to individual circumstances within prescribed limits. It was communal in essence and therefore at its best in supplying needs common to the whole community. Finally, it was systematic, even in quality, permanent and well equipped. When deciding how best social services may be provided, Ellis argued that policy makers should not forget the limitations to which public provision was inherently subject:

...mass production has its disadvantages in this field as well as in others. Neither by pensions nor police, by gifts nor restraints, can the social well-being of a single individual be secured without his co-operation. Good advice and Glaxo will not 'build bonnie babies' unless mother will take one and give baby the other. Compulsory powers are no key to the mass production of individual virtue.⁵³

During the inter-war period, as McCarthy and Thane have recently argued, government ministers and civil servants welcomed continuing involvement and experiment by the voluntary sector.⁵⁴ The government's attitude towards the role of voluntary organizations between the wars was, Bernard Harris argues, influenced by a number of factors, of which the most important was the desire to limit public

⁵² Parker Morris, 'The Respective Spheres of Public Authorities and Voluntary Organizations in the Administration of Social Services', *Public Administration*, 5/4 (October 1927), 388.

⁵³ L. F. Ellis, 'The Respective Spheres of Public Authorities and Voluntary Organizations in the Administration of Social Services', *Public Administration* 5/4 (October 1927), 393.

⁵⁴ Helen McCarthy and Pat Thane, 'The Politics of Association in Industrial Society', *Twentieth Century British History*, 22/2 (2011), 217-229. See also Rodney Lowe, 'Welfare's Moving Frontier', *Twentieth Century British History*, 6/3 (1993), 369-76.

expenditure in accordance with orthodox financial principles.⁵⁵ An important example of the state working alongside private charity can be seen in attempts to alleviate the distress caused by unemployment between 1918 and 1939. From 1932 the government awarded a grant to the NCSS to enable it to co-ordinate the establishment of unemployed clubs, or voluntary occupational centres throughout the country. It granted a total of £520,000 for this purpose. The Ministry of Labour also made a series of separate grants to voluntary organizations through the Special Areas Fund from 1934 onwards.

In 1937, the think tank Political and Economic Planning (P.E.P) produced a study of Britain's Social Services along with proposals for their reform. The report also considered the nature and extent of voluntary social services and highlighted the major variations in the relationships that existed between voluntary social service organizations and public authorities. It acknowledged that there had been a natural tendency over the previous thirty years for the public social services to take the place of voluntary social services over a wide range of activities, that this period 'has been marked by the development of many new forms of voluntary effort and by a growing disposition of public authorities and voluntary bodies to enter into some form of partnership.' The report argued that there were 'certain general conditions' under which the provision of social services by voluntary bodies seemed appropriate, including those of an experimental or controversial nature, and therefore involving an element of risk. Other possible conditions included those demanding exceptional freedom of opinion; those requiring individual attention to intimate personal problems, and those demands which could be and were met by private enterprise, which did not need to ask for support from public funds.⁵⁶ The tentative nature of the partnership was assumed by P.E.P. who suggested that the 'question is one of *relative convenience*', and of the state of opinion at a given time, rather than of an absolute and permanent division of territory. Moreover:

⁵⁵ Bernard Harris, 'Responding to Adversity: Government-Charity Relations and the Relief of Unemployment in Inter-War Britain', *Contemporary Record*, 9/3 (1995), 533.

⁵⁶ Political and Planning Economic, (PEP) *Report on the British Social Services: A Survey of the Existing Public Social Services in Great Britain with Proposals for Future Development* (London: Political and Economic Planning, 1937).

[...] the advantages and disadvantages of voluntary social provision cannot be rightly assessed without taking account of certain imponderable factors: elasticity, goodwill, self-sacrifice, enthusiastic service on the one hand; untidiness and some measure of hypocrisy and 'humbug' on the other hand, which frequently weigh down the scales on one side or the other whatever the theoretical merits of the case.⁵⁷

In the same year, Professor of Social Science at the University of Liverpool, T. S. Simey considered in more detail the justification for the voluntary principle in particular circumstances and the most satisfactory relationship between public authorities and voluntary organizations where they existed in similar fields. Whether statutory or voluntary, in Simey's eyes democratic theory demanded that management of social services should be carried out in close association with the daily lives of ordinary people, who should be able to control them. He went on to highlight two contrasting ways in which the relationship between voluntary organizations and statutory social services could be envisaged. The first was the parallel bars theory, advocated by religious bodies who regarded voluntary service as an end in itself, and therefore different from the ends-orientated service provided by secular state services. Second, the extension ladder theory, the more orthodox view of the time, provided sounder justification for voluntary service, considering its performance an act of citizenship. Simey concluded that state expansion would require greater, not less, cooperation with voluntary organizations, 'in order to prevent competition and overlapping, and to ensure that the work of the voluntary bodies will be truly "supplementary", and not an unsatisfactory substitute for properly organized public services.'⁵⁸

The relationships of CAB with other voluntary organizations were, as we have seen, to be carefully coordinated to avoid the perils of overlapping and duplication of effort. The intention of the NCSS was not to supplant existing peace-time sources of information and help such as local British Legion, Sailors' and Airmen's Families Associations, Councils of Social Service, Charity Organization Societies, Guilds of Help and other Personal Service Bodies. The intention was to co-ordinate those

⁵⁷ Ibid., 173-4.

⁵⁸ Thomas S. Simey, *Principles of Social Administration* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1937), 154

organizations currently undertaking 'citizen friend' activities.⁵⁹ Another important assumption was that the state's role was to provide a basic level of provision in times of ordinary distress and that this should be supplemented by voluntary effort during a period of exceptional need. Another important factor related to concerns over the implications for democracy of the state taking over completely, the responsibility for welfare provision.

Labour's relationship with charitable effort been charted by historians such as Ross McKibbin and Bernard Harris.⁶⁰ The left's attitude towards charity was mixed and sometime contradictory. Certain aspects of socialist ideology saw charity work as undemocratic, condescending, and patronising due, in part, to the experience of some working-class people. Indeed, charity could be condescending, with a middle class-emphasis on individual self-responsibility, but this was not always the case. Where charity was not condescending, Labour were more forgiving. Labour were also supportive of mutual forms of voluntary action present within trade unions and friendly societies. Yet hostility towards perceived middle-class forms of professional social work remained in some places, especially where voluntary organizations were being used as agents of the state to provide welfare services that the left, sometimes rightly, assumed to be undemocratic and unaccountable. In February 1937, Morgan Jones Labour MP for Caerphilly expressed unease at the growth of a new professional class, 'the professional voluntary worker.' 'I don't doubt his intentions are good, but I don't like to see a new class of people growing up drawing salaries from public funds, yet drawing such salaries outside public control and outside state control.' At the same time he went on to argue for the continuing importance of voluntary work: 'there should not be brought into the scheme ornamental people, people with handles to their

⁵⁹ TNA CAB 102/743, Citizens Advice Bureaux – A Service and Help in time of War, July 1939

⁶⁰ Ross McKibbin, *Classes and Cultures: England 1918-1951* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1998); Bernard Harris, 'Responding to Adversity: Government-Charity Relations and the Relief of Unemployment in Inter-War Britain', *Contemporary Record*, 9/3 (1995), 529-561; Pilgrim Trust, *Men Without Work* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1938).

names, who just because they have leisure available are shoved into some job. It should be manned by men and women who have not lost the common touch.'⁶¹

Strands of thought within socialist ideology were not hostile to all forms of voluntary endeavour. Hostility certainly existed, but this was not necessarily devoted at attacking all forms of voluntary effort and social service *per se*. It was rather the assumption that these should act as replacements to rather than supplements to statutory services financed through taxation. Clement Attlee (who had been a social worker at Toynbee Hall), Herbert Morrison and other Labour supporters continued to hold voluntary service in high regard and sought to incorporate it alongside statutory welfare services. An important example was the financing by the Labour controlled London County Council of voluntary welfare services for the blind.⁶²

During the early stages of the war, the Labour Party was broadly supportive of the new information bureaux; in many cases, Labour set up their own information offices. The Labour Party suggested that CAB were good, but only in areas where Labour Party publicity and information bureaux were not already in existence. The Labour Party were happy not to attack, and sometimes support, bureaux where they were non-partisan, or where there was no other alternative source of information and advice in the vicinity. For Conservative supporters, voluntary social services and charitable effort remained important components of a liberal polity. This was especially the case for voluntary organizations leading the way in the provision of experimental social services. For example, Eustace Percy, the Conservative politician, diplomat and a member of the NCSS executive committee was keen to reorganise government along co-operative lines, but leaving space for voluntary services.⁶³ He observed in 1935: 'The Conservative cares little for forms of Parliamentary procedure or for formal doctrines of Cabinet responsibility; for him, the essence of the constitution is ... the balance

⁶¹ The Manchester Guardian, 9 Feb 1937, 5.

⁶² Madeline Roof, *Voluntary Societies and Social Policy* (London: Routledge, Kegan Paul, 1957).

⁶³ Philip Williamson, 'Percy, Eustace Sutherland Campbell, Baron Percy of Newcastle (1887–1958)', *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, Oxford University Press, 2004; online edn, Jan 2008 [<http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/35473>, accessed 3 Dec 2011]

between government authority and free voluntary service, constantly mobilising itself afresh for public needs.’⁶⁴

⁶⁴ Eustace Percy, ‘The Conservative Attitude and Conservative Social Policy’, in Eustace Percy et al. *Conservatism and the Future* (London: W. Heinemann, 1935).

2.5. Outcomes

Following the Munich crisis in 1938, planners within the statutory and voluntary social services anticipated that wartime conditions would require large-scale intervention by government in all areas of public life. Writing in July 1939, the NCSS argued that wartime conditions aimed at protecting civilian life would see the growth of official control and regulation on a scale 'hitherto unknown,' and with it, 'confusion in the mind of the individual citizen.' Moreover, as well as new problems, existing problems would be complicated by the conditions of wartime. The CAB quickly became a focal point in discussions over how best voluntary organizations could disseminate information about voluntary and state social services. The emergency conditions of wartime were stressed repeatedly by those planning the CAB. At the back of their minds lurked the spectre of total war and, with it, the potential obliteration of Britain's cities from the air through concentrated bombing. Emergency conditions in British cities would, it was expected, led to new needs for relief by people 'who have not previously required help and who therefore do not know where to find and how to obtain the benefits available.'⁶⁵

Information would have an additional role in wartime, namely prevention of panic, through bolstering morale. To this end, the CAB envisaged that the provision of information to the Ministry of Information would help the state monitor morale. Additionally, the CAB would indirectly help to preserve morale by removing unnecessary anxieties and allaying fears before they had time to spread. The problem of maintaining wartime morale was considered by pre-war planners, based on assumptions that the general population would, by and large, be unable to withstand the pressure of war, in particular that the working classes would prove to be unreliable and defeatist.⁶⁶

In the first few weeks, the list of those consulting bureaux included: 'young wives who had never faced a difficult problem single-handed until their husbands were called up;

⁶⁵ National Council of Social Service, *CAB and Advice Centres in Liberated Europe* (London: National Council of Social Service, 1944) 13. See also *The Times*, 12 January 1940.

⁶⁶ Clive Ponting, *1940: Myth and Reality* (London: Hamish Hamilton, 1990). Tom Harrisson, *Living through the Blitz* (London: Collins, 1976).

parents whose sons now in the Army, had been their chief support, men whose businesses are now frowned upon as a luxury trade, middle-class unemployed who do not know of the special register for them, and young people who have begun to buy a house and cannot go on paying the money while the husband is away.'¹

Almost immediately, Bureaux began to uncover problems created by the new conditions of wartime. For example, wives separated from husbands who had been called up for military service were unable to draw separation allowances awarded through Court Orders or paternity orders against them. Consequently women were coming to the Bureaux in great distress. The London Council of Social Service wrote to the Unemployment Assistance Board for clarification in August 1939.²

¹ The Manchester Guardian, 17 January 1940.

² TNA AST 7/420, Letter from Wyndham Deedes to G. T. Reid, 30 August 1939.

2.6. Conclusions

When considering the plans for the establishment of the CAB, it is clear just how much was being left open to improvisation. The plans reflected a general unease with the implications of large scale bureaucratic organization for democracy in modern society, and recognised that information needs in wartime would be much greater than they were in peacetime. Despite this, there was a general lack of clarity about the form voluntary information and advice service should take. It was to be imbued with the general principles that guided voluntary organizations' work during the inter-war period, and its work was to be carried out alongside the state and in partnership with it.

The CAB entered the Second World War overly prepared for the role it would eventually assume. Within a few months of war breaking out, over 1,000 bureaux were in operation. However, it soon became apparent these numbers outstripped demand as the expected bombing didn't happen. In the first months of the war some bureaux received few if any visitors. In a sense, the CAB's plans for wartime operations were based on the same assumptions of the government about the almost immediate destruction of British cities. There was therefore an overemphasis on the morale-boosting nature of CAB work. There was also a tendency to rely on pre-existing voluntary organizations, such as Councils of Social Service, Charity Organization Societies and local case-work bodies to deliver CAB services.

Within one or two months of their opening, *The Manchester Guardian* suggested that bureaux might be retained in peacetime as necessary guides through the social services, which became more complicated with every financial advance they make.⁴ The CAB represented a liberal critique of bureaucracy, i.e. the growth of large-scale organization both in size and complexity. However, its own solution was to create yet more bureaux, this time focusing on pin-pointing the way for individuals lost in a morass of regulation, information and different sources of help.

Yet volunteers would be led by professionals in a manner that lent itself to their continued usefulness. The CAB signalled the continued growth of semi-trained volunteers who could exhibit the characteristics and understanding of professional

⁴ *The Manchester Guardian*, 17 January 1940.

social workers, an example that it was hoped would be followed by other voluntary organizations. Alongside the ordinary volunteer, the professional or expert, such as a doctor or lawyer, would continue to give their service freely to the community. Again this followed inter-war trends in voluntary organizations.⁵ The willingness of traditional professions such as doctors and lawyers to give their services for the good of the community, was evidence, in the sociologist T. H. Marshall's words that, 'the professions are being socialised'. 'The professions ...' he argued, 'are ready to work as a team'.⁶

⁵ Katherine Bradley, *Poverty, Philanthropy and the State* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2009).

⁶ T. H. Marshall, 'The Recent History of Professionalism in Relation to Social Structure and Social Policy', *Canadian Journal of Economics and Political Science*, 5/3 (1939) 335.

3. The CAB in Wartime, 1939-45

3.1. Introduction

This chapter charts the development of the CAB during the war years. The organization grew rapidly and within a few years of its founding there were about one thousand bureaux dispersed throughout the country. Each Bureau was autonomous and worked in close connection with the statutory authorities and other voluntary bodies. Business was normally conducted by a representative committee, in some towns working under the auspices of a Council of Social Service or casework agency, and organising their work to be able to call on the services of experts and individuals with special knowledge. Above each local CAB were regional and county committees which advised on questions of policy and organization and assisted in maintaining and improving the quality of work.

These and similar issues are of great historical significance. The actions and contributions of voluntary organizations during the Second World War deserve closer historical scrutiny. James Hinton has examined the history of the Women's Voluntary Service during the Second World War, while Pat Thane and Tanya Evans have examined in great detail the work of the National Council for the Unmarried Mother and her Child during the War.¹ However, as Jose Harris has argued, despite all that has been written on the history of the war, little attention has been given to the sheer diversity of wartime experience of different individuals, organizations, social groups and localities.²

Existing historical accounts of the CAB are few. The main work is an institutional history, which fails to consider the organization in context.³ The CAB provides an important case study for an examination of the relationship of the voluntary sector to

¹ James Hinton, *Women, Social Leadership, and the Second World War: Continuities of Class* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2002); Pat Thane and Tanya Evans, *Sinners? Scroungers? Saints? Unmarried Motherhood in Twentieth-Century England* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012) 54-82.

² José Harris, 'War and Social History: Britain and the Home Front during the Second World War', *Contemporary European History*, 1/1 (1992) 17-35.

³ Jean Richards, *Inform, Advise and Support: 50 Years of the Citizens Advice Bureau* (Cambridge: Lutterworth Press, 1989).

the state and of the state to society. Firstly, the CAB was a nation-wide organization, built on the previous experience of voluntary social work and on the efforts of many local as well as national welfare agencies. From the outset, the only thing many of the bureaux had in common was the name. Some were set up by pre-existing community organizations responsible for the organization of charitable work - Personal Social Service Societies, Guilds of Helps, and Councils of Social Service, while others were established by individuals or other voluntary organizations, such as the British Legion or Women's Voluntary Service or by Churches.

It is possible to use the CAB as a prism through which to view a cross section of the voluntary organizations active in mid-twentieth century Britain. An analysis of the role of the CAB can also indicate the ways in which citizenship was recognized by contemporaries and the extent to which rights and needs of citizens were perceived by contemporaries.⁴

Firstly, this section considers the changing nature of voluntary work and social work as motivations for the creation of the CAB. Second, by exploring the political and ideological context, it explores the external influences and trends that encouraged or discouraged the growth of the CAB. The third section focuses on the social backgrounds of volunteers for the bureaux. Finally, the fourth section considers the position of the individual in wartime, the nature of the problems that were brought to individual bureaux and the social backgrounds of claimants.

⁴ Janet Fink, 'Welfare, Poverty and Social Inequalities', in Paul Addison and Harriet Jones (eds.), *A Companion to Contemporary Britain, 1939-2000* (Oxford: Blackwell, 2005), 263-80.

3.2. Aims and goals

The growth of the CAB was so rapid, A.F.C. Bourdillon argued in 1945, 'because war has disturbed the private lives of ordinary citizens to an unprecedented extent, and Government regulations, seeking to control and direct this disturbance, have impinged upon private individuals as never before. The citizen needs information and advice about all the new factors which the war has brought into his life, and the Bureau supplies this need.'⁵

One significant development of wartime was the growth of the interventionist state and the simultaneous modification of the character of British political culture from being localised and voluntaristic to becoming more centralised and bureaucratic. War reinforced and accelerated a number of changes. These changes were set out in the journal *Political and Economic Planning* in October 1941:

War has put a new perspective of our national life. Perhaps the most significant change has been the switch over from a negative, regulatory conception of government, controlling a very limited range of activities, to a positive and constructive type of government that is having not only to alter its functions, but to seek new ideas, new working methods and new personnel. It has also compelled private citizens and unofficial organizations of all types to re-examine what they are doing and how best they can do it.⁶

Due to wartime measures such as the 1940 Emergency Powers Act, individuals in Britain came into greater contact with the state than ever before. 'It was increasingly regarded', as Richard Titmuss put it, 'as a proper function or even obligation of Government to ward off distress and strain among not only the poor but almost all classes of society'. In 1940 and 1941 there was a flurry of activity on the social services front. Cheap meals and free milk for school children, immunization and other health

⁵ A. F. C. Bourdillon, 'Voluntary organizations in war-time - Citizens' Advice Bureaux', in A. F. C. Bourdillon (ed.), *Voluntary Social Services: Their Places in the Modern state* (London: Methuen & Co. Ltd., 1945), 194-206, 195.

⁶ Political and Economic Planning, 'The Home Front', *Planning*, 7/153 (1939) 1-14, 1. See also: José Harris, 'War and Social History: Britain and the Home Front during the Second World War', *Contemporary European History*, 1/1 (1992) 17-35, p. 25; José Harris, 'Society and the State in Twentieth-Century Britain', in F. M. L. Thompson (ed.), *The Cambridge Social History of Britain 1750-1950, Volume 3: Social Agencies and Institutions* (3; Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1990), 63-118.

programmes, expansion of hospital services, increased pensions (under the Old Age and Widows Pensions Act, 1940), abolition of means testing for social service payments, assistance to evacuees and aid to those suffering damage to life, limb or property as a result of war damage (under the War Damages Act, 1941). In 1940, the Unemployment Assistance Board became the National Assistance Board and expanded its clientele to include pensioners and those suffering from war damage caused by bombing.⁷

Wartime bureaucracy was accepted, barely, on the assumption that it was necessary for winning the war. This did not always make it easier to live with, as the following quote from the NCSS information department suggests:

It is one of the accepted misfortunes of war that civilian life should be restricted and regulated in a way which, in other circumstances, would be quite intolerable. It is now widely known that most of this essential control is carried out by means of Statutory Rules and orders which are often almost incomprehensible to the ordinary citizen.⁸

Information in wartime was, according to Tom Harrisson, the creator of the Mass-Observation organization, the 'lifeline of civil defence'. In an article of August 1941, Harrisson went so far as to suggest that the social welfare services were seriously handicapped by the lack of mental preparation, advance information, and pre-education of the citizens. He argued that those in government had failed to appreciate the 'oceanic ignorance', of the majority of people of the function of different Government departments, or the working of a local authority. This problem was extremely relevant after a blitz when 'the accepted social structure ... is shaken up – and even temporarily shattered – in one night'. The article ended with a stark summing up: 'In modern, total war, the main defence ... the ammunition of the citizen is information, interest and enthusiasm about what is going on, and why, and whither.'

⁷ Richard Titmuss, *Problems of Social Policy* (London: HMSO, 1950), 506-8.

⁸ LMA AC 73/46/11/CAB 2/1, Letter from G. Reymayne to J. S. Morgan, 19 December 1944.

Harrison recommended that the CAB be moved more directly into the pattern of local or central administration, and financially strengthened.⁹

The new social needs of wartime, incorporating the whole population and not just the working class, were summarised in an article in *The Times*, which argued in January 1940:

The war has been accompanied by much distress for those whose affairs have been disturbed by unavoidable economic changes ... very many people stricken down by unexpected misfortune, are quite unable to help themselves. Never having been in serious need before, they are not in touch with such agencies as may be available for their assistance.¹⁰

Added to this new wartime need were the gradual changes of the previous thirty to forty years. As Richard Clements, Regional Organizer for the NCSS, and the CAB told representatives of voluntary organizations assembled at a 1943 meeting of a CAB Regional Advisory Committee:

In the lifetime of many of those present Great Britain had passed through a silent social revolution. There has been a mass of legislation passed since the opening of the century aiming at the improvement of the conditions of living of the common man. The inevitable result had been that they had made a better society, but the price paid for it was increasing perplexity and complication, especially for ordinary rank and file people.¹¹

Mr A. M. Watson, Regional Officer for Civil Defence of the NCSS, told the assembled members of the Burnley Citizens Guild in 1939:

They were living in a period of change, a change which started 30 years ago, and they had not yet connected up the various outwards signs of change. There was a tremendous change in the social order, and they did not see it as one whole piece. They must try to get a picture of

⁹ Tom Harrison, 'Blitz Information - The Lifeline of Civil Defence', *Local Government Service*, 21/8 (August 1941) 177-83.

¹⁰ *The Times*, 12 January 1940.

¹¹ LMA AC 73/46/10/CAB Future 1943-44, Report of meeting to reconsider the future of the Citizens Advice Bureau, 13 August 1943, 3.

it as a whole and be determined that something should be done about it.¹²

The 'complexity' of modern life, it was often argued, would add to the sense of panic once the bombing of British cities began. H.M. Wallsworth, later Professor of Political Science at Manchester, writing in December 1939, stated that 'the increasing complexity of our social life makes it harder for people of scant education and narrow experience to come to a wise decision when confronted with difficulty in their daily lives.'¹³

The social problem of maintaining morale reflected pre-existing governmental concerns about the willingness of the general population to withstand the pressures of war, and the secret belief that the working class would prove unreliable and defeatist.¹⁴ The CAB expertly reflected these concerns by claiming (in a memorandum to the Ministry of Health in December 1939) that:

The Bureaux have rendered material assistance to the Government in helping to mitigate the widespread effects of disorganizations over the past four months, and it is difficult to overemphasize their importance in the maintenance of public morale, particularly in working-class districts where at times of crisis people are apt to be easily disturbed.¹⁵

Another of the CAB's motives, reminiscent of Victorian philanthropy, was to assist the social and political integration of the excluded sections of society.¹⁶ Hence the CAB saw itself acting as an agent of class reconciliation. Dorothy Keeling, writing in 1943 stressed 'during the past five years we have delivered the goods; we have not only answered eight million enquiries, we have not only trained a large number of recruits

¹² LMA AC 73/46/34/Burnley, CAB: Invaluable link in social service, 15 November 1939.

¹³ LMA 4016/A/04/029, Report on Citizens Advice Bureaux by H. M. Wallsworth, December 1939.

¹⁴ Clive Ponting, *1940: Myth and Reality* (London: Hamish Hamilton, 1990). See also Tom Harrisson, *Living Through the Blitz* (London: Collins, 1976).

¹⁵ TNA T/6/1221, Voluntary Social Service Organizations in Time of War, Memo by the Ministry of Health, 29 December 1939.

¹⁶ Brian Harrison 'Philanthropy and the Victorians', *Victorian Studies* 9/4 (1966) 353-374.

for the work, but we have built up a better understanding between various classes of the community.’¹⁷

New social problems required new approaches. The fact that the new CAB were intended for use by ‘all citizens – the business and professional man and woman, the stranger, the alien, the housewife, the employer and employee, the landlord and tenant, parent and child, rich and poor’, required a new approach to social problems.¹⁸ The new approach simultaneously signified a reaction against the older, more discriminating form of charity that was thought no longer appropriate or applicable in the changed economic and social circumstances of wartime; and also an attempt to avoid usurping the functions of such bodies as personal service agencies performing casework. In addition, it symbolised recognition of the state’s increasing responsibility for the material well being of the individual. Fundamental to this new, all-encompassing approach, was the separation of giving financial or material assistance, such as clothes or relief, from giving non-material aid such as advice and information. As the NCSS put it:

[T]he relationship of equality between a client and advice worker which is essential for the effective working of such a service is bound to suffer if the advice worker is known to have power to influence the kind of material relief which the client is anxious to obtain.¹⁹

This also reflected the attempts of the NCSS and social workers to broaden the concept of social work and of social service away from relief of the individual in distress towards a definition that embraced ‘common efforts of the community to enrich normal life’.²⁰ These sentiments were demonstrated in individual bureaux. In a speech to the Long Eaton Rotary Club in 1939 on the importance of the CAB, area representative of the NCSS, Major E. Sanford Carter, emphasised the need for a

¹⁷ LMA AC/74/46/10/CAB Future 1943-44, The Immediate Future of the CAB Movement, D. C. Keeling, undated.

¹⁸ LMA 4016/A/04/029, Citizens’ Advice Bureaux and relief, 9 December 1940.

¹⁹ National Council of Social Service, *Citizens’ Advice Bureaux in Britain and Advice Centres in Liberated Europe*, (London: National Council of Social Service, 1944), 18.

²⁰ Margaret Brasnett, *Voluntary Social Action: A History of the National Council of Social Service* (London: National Council of Social Service, 1969).

“general viewpoint” during wartime.²¹ He argued that if the voluntary service organizations put their minds to the job through debates, discussions among members and the collecting of information on the various aspects of life with which they are associated, they would be able to go to whatever quarters were necessary and give an accurate survey of public opinion, which would be of tremendous value to the community as a whole. It was this ‘general viewpoint’, as opposed to the fragmentary, piecemeal approach, that would yield a solution to society’s problems.

The work of the CAB relied on particular conceptions of social- and case-work, and its creation and growth was intended to complement their functions. During the Second World War, there was a continuing debate within social work circles over the usefulness of the scientific, specialist, diagnostic approach of the inter-war years and as opposed to the more holistic, community approach. The CAB considered itself an off-shoot of casework, providing an outlet for the generalist volunteer adviser, carefully supervised by the trained professional social worker. Advice work provided the ‘bigger picture’ that was thought to be missing from specialist social work. CAB literature stressed the importance of recognising and appreciating the relationship between an advice service and casework. CAB work was defined as a “first-aid service”. The function of advice work of the CAB variety was to help ‘the normally independent person whose temporary difficulties are due to an unexpected change of circumstance or to a new demand which is made on him by the community.’ This was in contrast with the ‘type of enquiry which suggests the existence of some permanent difficulties with which the enquirer cannot cope without active help’.²² CAB work, as Dorothy Keeling put it, ‘applies a simple remedy to a difficulty which has not yet become a complex problem and perhaps never will if dealt with promptly on the spot’, and was seen as a means of preventing long-term casework.²³ ‘The general enquiries of the public’, she wrote in 1946, ‘are too numerous to be dealt with by one caseworker for each town, while the caseworker should be freed in order to devote her time in the

²¹ LMA AC 73/46/19/Long Eaton, *The Long Eaton Advertiser*, 1 December 1939.

²² National Council of Social Service, *Citizens’ Advice Bureau in Britain and Advice Centres in Liberated Europe* (London: NCSS, 1944)

²³ Dorothy Clarissa Keeling, *The Crowded Stairs: Recollections of Social Work in Liverpool* (London: National Council of Social Service, 1961).

more complicated cases. This should prove a most fruitful partnership between the trained and voluntary adviser and the full time caseworker.'²⁴

The new approach to social work as enshrined in the work of the CAB also functioned as a form of feedback to government, thus linking social work with social reform. While maintaining a centrist approach, the CAB did not eschew its role of influencing government social policy. It was important that trained social workers should not become estranged from wider society and that their skills did not distract them from espousing larger social principles.²⁵

²⁴ LMA AC 73/46/71/Finance/2, Letter to Secretaries of CAB, 9 July 1946.

²⁵ Jane Lewis, 'Women, social work and social welfare in twentieth-century Britain: from (unpaid) influence to (paid) oblivion?' in Martin Daunton (ed.), *Charity, Self-interest and Welfare in the English Past* (London: UCL Press, 1996), 203-23.

3.3 Structure and organization

The staffs of the bureaux were equally varied. By the end of the war, a 1945 report estimated that of the 10,000 men and women at work in the CAB, 90 per cent were voluntary workers.²⁶ The CAB argued that every person was a potential volunteer and it was the responsibility of those with leisure time to give voluntary service to those struggling with the complexities of modern life. Writing in 1945, A.F.C. Bourdillon argued that CAB 'are already distinguished in that they have attracted to social work a large number of people who have never before undertaken voluntary service.'²⁷ Dorothy Keeling told a meeting of the CAB Regional Advisory Committee in Birmingham that the service 'had attracted far more people than had ever been attracted to social service in the past.'²⁸

The emphasis on the less privileged and 'ordinary' volunteer, 'the whole man in service to the everyman', runs through the institutional histories of the CAB.²⁹ It demonstrates a determined effort by advocates of the CAB service to distance it in the public's minds from the patronising and condescending benevolence that, it was argued, characterised the work of the personal social service societies and casework bodies from which they had developed. As PEP argued:

The obligation of service must be laid on every individual, and although a part can be commuted through taxation, part must be discharged in person in order to enforce the principle of responsibility and to create a society which can grow and adjust itself without constantly becoming distorted.³⁰

CAB policymakers hoped that the work within each bureau would be divided among workers, organizers and experts. More than nine-tenths of the people who worked in

²⁶ Jean Richards, *Inform, Advise and Support: 50 Years of the Citizens Advice Bureau* (Cambridge: Lutterworth Press, 1989).

²⁷ A. F. C. Bourdillon, 'Voluntary organizations in war-time - Citizens' Advice Bureaux', in A. F. C. Bourdillon (ed.), *Voluntary Social Services: Their Places in the Modern state* (London: Methuen & Co. Ltd., 1945), 194-206, 205.

²⁸ LMA AC 73/46/10/Policy/CAB Future 1943-4, The future of Citizens' Advice Bureau, discussion at meeting of CAB Regional Advisory Committee in Birmingham, 18 June 1943, 3.

²⁹ Margaret Brasnett, *The Story of the Citizens' Advice Bureaux* (London: National Council of Social Service, 1964), 77.

³⁰ *Planning 'The New Pattern'*, PEP, 8/178 (1941), 9.

bureaux and sat on the various committees of the organization, it was suggested, were part-time, untrained and unpaid. It would be impractical and undesirable for the service to be run by full-time trained social workers. In contrast with the social worker, the part-time worker was in close daily contact with events in the home, the factory, the office or on the land. As the NCSS argued in its annual report:

It is much easier for the untrained person to appreciate some of the difficulties of the ordinary enquirer, for instance, in understanding the official language of forms which are to be filled in, than it is for the trained person who is very familiar with official regulations. On the other hand the unpaid part-time worker has no opportunity to take part in public service – an opportunity which has in the past been largely reserved for the well-to-do and leisured.³¹

At the head of each bureau stood the bureau organizer. It was hoped that the organizer would be a trained social worker, but, failing that, 'a mature person with experience of life may be better equipped for this function than an inexperienced person with some academic knowledge of social work.' The trained workers could get most out of volunteers who, 'may not have the type of experience or knowledge [of social work] but has invaluable gifts of friendliness, personal interest, unprofessionalism and common sense.'³² The organizer of a bureau who had no practical experience of systematic social work was to be encouraged to attend a training course during the early stages of the work.³³ Finally, each bureau was expected to call on the voluntary services of experts, with a panel consisting of some of the following: a solicitor, doctor, minister of religion, trade unionist, house-agent, an insurance manager and so on. Members of this panel would be separately responsible for the accuracy of the specialist information or advice which they tendered.

Although the volunteer as idealized, or imagined, by the National Council of Social Service, the Citizens Advice Bureaux and by social workers could be drawn from any section of society there were several aspects of this archetype/ideal volunteer that

³¹ National Council of Social Service, *Citizens' Advice Bureaux in Britain and Advice Centres in Liberated Europe* (London: National Council of Social Service, 1944), 34.

³² Una M. Cormack, 'An Islington Experiment', *Social Work*, (1941) 424-32, 423.

³³ National Council of Social Service, *Citizens' Advice Bureaux in Britain and Advice Centres in Liberated Europe* (London: National Council of Social Service, 1944), 35.

suggested a middle class background. Despite claims by Geoffrey Finlayson, that the war helped philanthropy become more egalitarian and less elitist in composition, it was mostly the middle classes who continued to volunteer for work in the CAB.³⁴ Among volunteers as a whole during the Second World War, evidence collected by James Hinton suggests that the majority of volunteers were still middle-class married or unmarried elderly women with leisure time available for voluntary work.³⁵ Elderly women were the only people not conscripted in some sort of war service. In reality the CAB were affected by a severe shortage of volunteers in some areas due to the call up of young middle-class married women.³⁶ These and other factors ensured that the CAB remained, by and large, middle class. For example, one solution to the problem of shortages of volunteers was for CAB to rely on existing volunteers from other organizations. Proposals for the service shown to the government urged consideration of the importance of securing workers with previous experience or training in personal service work and the possibility of recruitment of volunteers through existing organizations such as the churches, Rotary Clubs, Toc H, and WVS.³⁷

Other clues suggest that the ideal worker was middle class, for example the assumption held by organizers that volunteers would have time for private study and personal development. The importance of training was repeatedly stressed, including the need for preliminary training or refresher courses designed to meet the needs of those undertaking more specialized work and carrying out more straightforward duties. Voluntary workers, it was hoped, would be prepared to devote some time to study social legislation, through courses in university social studies departments.³⁸

³⁴ Geoffrey Finlayson, 'A Moving Frontier: Voluntarism and the state in British Social Welfare, 1911-1949', *Twentieth Century British History*, 1/2 (1990) 183-206, 201.

³⁵ James Hinton, *Women, Social Leadership, and the Second World War: Continuities of Class* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2002), 5.

³⁶ LMA AC 73/46/71/Reports, Report on Citizens' Advice Bureaux under the Durham Community Service Council by Agnes M. Carr, August 1942. For concerns around the shortage of volunteers in wartime, see 'The New Pattern', *PEP*, 8/178 (1941), 9.

³⁷ LMA 4016/A/04/029, Report of Interview with Mr. Hickson, Secretary of the Rotary International, 4 January 1940.

³⁸ National Council of Social Service, *Citizens' Advice Bureaux Handbook* (London: National Council of Social Service, 1941), 3.

'Brains', as A.H. Marshall put it, 'are indispensable for an advisory service'.³⁹ Commenting from outside the CAB service, J.E. Terry's suggestions for the advice giver are apt, for they give a sense of the need for intelligence and the discerning ear:

The best giver of advice is perhaps the expert listener, for intelligent listening is as often the secret of sound advice as it is of a happy marriage. To cut the speaker short is fatal, but to interrupt with the right question at the right moment is essential. Many a person in trouble can reach the specific problem only by a circuitous route, but the apparently irrelevant preamble will often give the clue to the most suitable solution and the best way of explaining it.⁴⁰

Early in the war, the NCSS warned the CAB that some workers were 'a little apt to accept a story on its face value, forgetting there are always two sides to any question.'⁴¹ The notion of study of social legislation suggested a level of education beyond the age 14 (the age at which compulsory full time education ended), which only a minority experienced in England and Wales until after the Second World War. In a 1944 publication, the CAB printed the occupations held by workers in a typical CAB office. They included: 'Housewives, Ministers of Religion, Business men and women (both active and retired), Trained Social Workers, Retired Civil servants of various government departments, Retired School Teachers, a Musician, and a retired builder.'⁴² The occupations listed suggest a shift in the social composition of volunteers, away from the leisured middle-class, towards the rising lower-middle class, whose expansion had characterised the inter-war decades. This list, due to the inclusion of many retired workers, also highlights the spread of pensions and retirement as a distinct possibility for the lower middle classes. There is even evidence, perhaps understandably, to suggest that the younger worker was often distrusted when compared with the more experienced CAB worker who was retired from another

³⁹ A. A. Marshall, 'An Information Service at Work', *Local Government Service*, 21/9 (1941) 206-7, 206.

⁴⁰ J. E. Terry, 'Legal Aid', in A. F. C. Bourdillon (ed.), *Voluntary Social Services: Their Places in the Modern state* (London: Methuen & Co. Ltd., 1945), 307-10, 309.

⁴¹ LMA 4016/A/04/029, NCSS, Hints on organization and work for Citizens' Advice Bureaux, no.1, 4 March 1940.

⁴² National Council of Social Service, *Citizens' Advice Bureaux in Britain and Advice Centres in Liberated Europe* (London: National Council of Social Service, 1944).

profession. In Lydney, Gloucestershire, Joan Woodbridge the travelling officer reported that a young secretary had been appointed, but had not been able to secure cooperation of the voluntary workers.⁴³

Ross McKibbin has described the “re-composition” of the middle class from 1931 to 1951. The middle classes, he suggests, changed in three respects. First was the huge increase in membership of technical/scientific professions; second, the overall relative decline in the number of employers; and third, the rapid entry of women into ‘middle’ class occupations.⁴⁴ Mike Savage has considered the relationship between affluence and identities through an examination of Mass Observers and their relationship to working, middle and upper classes in the years before and during the Second World War. He demonstrates ‘an acute sense of status deprivation’ among certain of the middle classes, and shows how the Mass Observers sought a new identity for themselves based on a ‘nascent technical and intellectual identity’, which they saw as departing from conventional middle-class claims to status and respectability. This quickly evaporated as the straitened climate of the post-war years created the need to defend the ‘personal’ factor by which the middle classes had traditionally commanded status privileges.⁴⁵

Certainly, the values that CAB work espoused suggested workers of a middle-class background. Similarly, in their work with enquirers, the ideal worker would show patience, thoroughness, sympathy, courtesy, initiative, intelligence, perseverance, tact and responsibility. These were values important, as Ross McKibbin has shown, in perpetrating a model of sociability whose aspiration was the elimination of tension and anxiety from personal relations and of anything likely to cause embarrassment. This ‘managerial’ style of the middle classes, emphasised social confidence over expertise, and was a part of CAB work (though expertise also mattered). Hence bureaux workers were still keen to consider themselves as generalists. Common sense and intelligence

⁴³ LMA AC/46/73/15, Report for November 1943, Joan Woodbridge, 18 January 1944.

⁴⁴ Ross McKibbin, *Classes and Cultures: England 1918-1951* (Oxford: OUP, 1998).

⁴⁵ Mike Savage, 'Affluence and Social Change in the Making of Technocratic Middle-Class Identities: Britain, 1939-55', *Contemporary British History*, 22/4 (2008) 457-76, 467. Also see Helen McCarthy, 'The League of Nations and Democratic Politics in Britain, c.1919-1939', Unpublished PhD (Institute of Historical Research, University of London, 2008).

were valued over expertise, with the recognition of a role for the specialist or expert in more difficult cases.

Each bureau was expected to appoint a local management committee, which would in turn act as the cornerstone of the service. The basic principle of bureau organization was that every bureau should work under the direction of a committee, to ensure that it was responsive to the needs of the local community; had the confidence of local people; was not controlled by a particular individual, sect or political party; and was in touch with local traditions and local feelings. As the CAB department of the NCSS illustrated:

A Local Management Committee is usually elected at an inaugural meeting called by the chief citizens of the place in which a bureau is to be set up. It should so far as possible represent all sections of the community, the different local voluntary organizations, the Churches and religious organizations, the Trade Unions, Women's organizations, the British Legion etc. It should also include members and officers of the local authority; this is frequently facilitated by having the first meeting for the promotion of a new bureau called by the mayor of a town or the civic head of an area.⁴⁶

Several bureaux set up during the war operated without a local committee. The CAB headquarters were firmly against any bureau operating in this way. The democratic nature of the service was threatened by the existence of bureaux lacking accountability or representation from the community. It claimed this was in stark contrast with the Women's Voluntary Service, which was 'undemocratic' in its reliance on individuals to carry out its work. For practical reasons also, the CAB leadership stressed the need for local committees to ensure institutional continuity. Their concerns were confirmed in cases where a bureau had collapsed or closed following the resignation of a Secretary.

The social composition of individual bureaux reflected the growing size and heterogeneity of the middle classes. In a rural bureau such as Lindsey, Lincolnshire, the workers were the traditional social leaders of the rural community, usually of a

⁴⁶ National Council of Social Service, *Citizens' Advice Bureaux in Britain and Advice Centres in Liberated Europe* (London: National Council of Social Service, 1944) 8.

generation born and educated before 1914. In Lindsey, the driving force behind the bureau was Major W. North-Coates MC, a formidable figure. In Bolton Lancashire, the CAB secretary Ernest J. Barlow, had been the head of the committee of the local Guild of Help, from which the CAB developed, since 1907. Clergymen were also commonly found in the lists of helpers and secretaries, particularly, although not exclusively, in rural parts of Britain. The CAB was notably weaker in rural areas, and was particularly weak in Scotland and Wales.

At the other end of the spectrum were an altogether different type of bureaux run by the newer middle classes, including those run by town clerks of local authorities. The Farnborough, Hants CAB, for example, was run overwhelmingly by members of the newer middle classes. The Secretary was Mrs D.P. Carpenter, former librarian at University College Southampton. The other workers (all female) consisted of teachers, a university lecturer, a book-keeper, a social worker, and wives of officials at the Royal Aircraft Establishment.

The social composition of a bureau's staff was heavily influenced by local geography. Rural villages tended to have staff consisting of the older middle class, while towns and more urban areas tended to reflect the development of the newer middle class. Bureaux seem to have relied for their success on the strength and popularity of the leader of the bureau. Again personality was emphasised just as much as expertise in social work. Eileen Morgan, Travelling Officer for the South West emphasised in a report of a 1945 meeting with the organizer of the Chipping Campden bureau, Professor Campagnac, that she thought the success of a bureau depended upon the personality of the organizer. She reassured him that if he was good, the people would soon get to know and come along.⁴⁷ Many leaders of bureaux, such as Mr A. H. Gale of Louth, Lincolnshire, were already well known in certain areas for being 'the right person to go to when in trouble'.⁴⁸ Relations within individual bureaux between workers and leaders were not always amicable. In Woodhall Spa, Lincolnshire, Mr J

⁴⁷ LMA AC 73/46/15, Note of meeting between Eileen Morgan and Professor Campagnac, North Cotswolds, Chipping Campden, to discuss strengthening up of CAB service in North Cotswolds, 9 October 1945.

⁴⁸ LMA AC 73/46/19, NCSS Midland Advisory Office, visit by travelling officer, 26 August 1948.

Belton, Headmaster and leader of the bureau emphasized: 'it is difficult to get effective action taken as the Spa is divided very definitely into two cliques, the "elite" and the workers, and there is a good deal of suspicion between them.'⁴⁹

The local nature of each bureau, and its reliance on voluntary workers to provide guidance and advice on local people's problems or difficulties, was not without failings. Privacy was important in the work of the CAB. However, in March 1940, the CAB department of the NCSS wrote to bureaux that cases had recently been brought to their notice, of workers discussing in public, the private, domestic affairs of enquirers. Workers, the circular went on to say, should regard information which they received in the course of their work as strictly confidential.⁵⁰

Geoffrey Finlayson has highlighted that a more professional and integrated approach was adopted by voluntary organizations to the questions which faced philanthropy at this time (although he underestimates the professionalism of early volunteers).⁵¹ The creation of the CAB can also be seen as signalling the increasing professionalism of social workers, for it was a service designed, created and led by trained social workers. Leadership had to come from trained social workers, otherwise the CAB, it was argued by its leaders, would lose its effectiveness.⁵² Unlike many organizations which grew up first in local units and later established a national organization, the CAB was planned from the centre by the NCSS. Central control evolved rapidly following the creation of the service. In June 1940 the NCSS appointed a CAB Policy Sub-Committee and in October 1941, the NCSS Emergency Committee agreed that the Grant Committee and the Policy Committee should be merged in a provisional CAB Committee.

The quality of individual bureaux was monitored and regularised from the centre. Standards were enforced by the CAB Travelling Officers, whose job was to enforce adherence to circulars and oversee the return of statistics. In November 1940, the Policy

⁴⁹ LMA AC 73/46/19, Letter from Richard Clements to Major W. North-Coates, 26 June 1940.

⁵⁰ LMA 4016/A/04/029, Circular from CAB department, 14 March 1940.

⁵¹ Geoffrey. Finlayson, 'A Moving Frontier: Voluntarism and the state in British Social Welfare, 1911-1949', *Twentieth Century British History*, 1/2 (1990) 183-206

⁵² TNA T/6/1221 Voluntary Social Service Organizations in Time of War – Citizens' Advice Bureaux, Memo to the Ministry of Health, 29 December 1939.

Sub-Committee introduced official recognition for bureaux which, when granted, enabled a bureau to use the official owl symbol. In October 1941 it was decided to allow all bureaux to use the Owl Sign, but that a certificate of approval could be applied for by those bureaux that had reached an agreed standard of efficiency and had been in existence for at least three months. Achieving uniformity of quality across the United Kingdom was no easy task, for the bureaux that opened at the beginning of the war were a miscellaneous collection, with many varying outlooks.

A bureau seeking approval had to ensure it carried out its functions as set out in the printed principles of the Citizens' Advice Bureau service; that the Regional Officer or the Regional CAB Advisory Committee was satisfied that its work was carried on in a satisfactory and efficient manner in relation to the needs of the district served; it had a Committee, representative of the voluntary societies of the neighbourhood and that was in effective contact with the local statutory authorities; it was non-party and non-Sectarian and that was available to all citizens; opened at times convenient to all sections of the community; took adequate steps to bring its services to the notice of the public; had an adequate staff of voluntary workers; kept a record of enquiries, making such monthly returns as were required; and was housed in accessible premises with suitable facilities for privacy.⁵³

In November 1940, CAB Travelling Officers (who were trained social workers) met in London to discuss their views on CAB working practices. Their meeting provides a useful insight into the standards expected of the individual bureaux. It was noted that there was sometimes considerable delay in receiving statistical returns. Methods of keeping case records were also discussed. These varied considerably from area to area and in many cases were deemed very unsatisfactory. It was agreed, therefore, that Travelling Officers should provide the London office with details of the methods adopted by the best bureaux in their areas and that notes based on this information should be issued, suggesting a standard form for keeping records. It was also agreed that Travelling Officers should be ready to speak at conferences on social problems in

⁵³ LMA AC 73/46/71, Certificates of Approval, December 1941.

their areas and they should call together groups of workers to discuss matters affecting the work of the CAB.⁵⁴

⁵⁴ LMA 4016/a/04/029, Meeting of Travelling Officers held at 26, Bedford Square, London, 5 November 1940.

3.4 External relations

A fundamental reason for the rapid growth of the CAB, in the eyes of its creators, related to its role in providing for a close relationship between the voluntary and statutory social services (both local and national). As A.F.C. Bourdillon put it in 1945, 'they are popular because they have found for themselves the sphere of voluntary activity which is "right" granted the present advanced stage of provision by the state.'⁵⁵ CAB across the country were encouraged to discuss all plans for their bureau with the relevant local authority, and to secure its approval and support from the outset. This attitude reflected, in part, the financial dependency of the fledgling CAB on the state and local authorities. The success of a bureau was thought to depend on the extent to which it co-operated with other organizations, both public and voluntary. It therefore followed that close contact should be maintained with the local authority and with representatives of central government departments. Co-operation also extended to other voluntary organizations, and this principle was adhered to in the use of existing bodies to set up bureaux. Not surprisingly, the NCSS sought government sanction for its plans for the CAB as quickly as possible, to attract government support. From the outset, the NCSS emphasised the value of the CAB working in co-operation with government, and in applications for grant-aid the NCSS were at pains to stress their co-operation with government departments.

In December 1939, the Ministry of Information compiled a list of the pros and cons of granting official recognition to CAB. It provides an interesting view of government attitudes to the CAB and to voluntary organizations in general. Some of the points in favour were: the CAB was given semi-official backing at the beginning; it filled a need; the CAB might take the place of projected official information offices; the NCSS was likely to obtain money from other government departments; and, the CAB might play a considerable part in maintaining public morale. The cons related to the potential prohibitive costs of funding large numbers of bureaux.⁵⁶

⁵⁵ A. F. C. Bourdillon, 'Voluntary organizations in war-time - Citizens' Advice Bureaux', in A. F. C. Bourdillon (ed.), *Voluntary Social Services: Their Places in the Modern state* (London: Methuen & Co. Ltd., 1945), 194-206.

⁵⁶ TNA HLG/102/316, Citizens' Advice Bureau, note, 11 December 1939.

As the initial flurry of activity abated following evacuation and the beginning of the Phoney War, there were wobbles in support, particular from the Treasury, who repeatedly expressed concerns over the usefulness of the CAB. The Treasury accused the CAB of artificially stoking demand and argued that a surplus of bureaux had been established in order to give the organization a better chance of qualifying for government subsidy. Another Treasury concern was that the bureaux presented a danger to public funds. As one official put it, 'they may become, in certain areas, means of providing expert assistance to the population to get maximum assistance from the Government under our various schemes for relief.'⁵⁷ Accordingly, the Government investigated claims by the NCSS in its 1940/41 grant application concerning the value of the CAB. George Haynes of the NCSS reflected the concerns of the Treasury in the grant application by stating that, 'the country [...] has had to deal with a more peaceful adjustment to war conditions than had been anticipated.'⁵⁸

These concerns were largely forgotten following the heavy bombing of British cities from late June 1940. The Blitz of British towns and cities damaged the assumption of the Government that the state could effectively manage post-raid relief by relying on local authorities. By 1941, officials in most government departments were agreed that the CAB was doing valuable work.⁵⁹ Sir John Maude, of the Ministry of Health answered questions from the Parliamentary Committee on Public Accounts on his department's expenditure on the CAB. He told the Committee 'that the actual expenditure is a trifling part of what would have been expended if the Citizens' Advice Bureaux had been staffed professionally and not by volunteers.'⁶⁰ Bureaux were mentioned in communications with local authorities, such as circulars, concerning their usefulness in connection with local authority run Information Centres for post-raid relief and advice. By the end of 1943, the Ministry of Labour began to formulate plans for state-run Resettlement Advice Offices and the Government was careful not to conflict with CAB work. As one official put it, 'no one I imagine would want to kill the

⁵⁷ TNA T/161/1221, H. N. Tribe to S. C. Alford, 13 October 1939.

⁵⁸ TNA T/161/1221, Application to the Ministry of Health for Grant-in-Aid for financial year 1940-41, 27 April 1940, 2.

⁵⁹ TNA HLG/102/316, H Wrigley to HE George, memo, 26 February 1941.

⁶⁰ Reports from the Committee of Public Accounts, with Proceedings, Evidence, Appendices and Index' (105; London: HMSO, 1940-1), 147, para. 1648.

voluntary work of the Citizens' Advice Bureaux'.⁶¹ The government trod carefully concerning the work of voluntary organizations, not wishing to disrupt their efforts, yet showing reluctance to endorse them fully. There was still some suspicion on the government side.

Perhaps the best way to evaluate the Government's attitude is by examining the amount of financial assistance given. The financial needs of the bureaux were set out in a memorandum in December 1939. It was anticipated that the annual cost of CAB work would be £150,000. Of this, two thirds would be paid for by a combination of voluntary societies and local authorities. The CAB received significant grant funding through the war years from the Ministry of Health, averaging around £35,000 per year from 1941 to 1946. In Parliament, Government representatives referenced the usefulness of CAB and its support for it while some MPs, such as the Wolverhampton Liberal MP, Geoffrey Mander visited their local bureau, and were clearly impressed by their work.⁶²

In line with the plans for establishing bureaux, local authority support was sought from the outset by individual bureaux in almost all cases. The attitudes of local authorities varied widely. In Farnham, the travelling officer reported that the CAB met little success due to the attitudes of the Clerk of the Council. 'He holds the opinion', the report read, 'that the local authority can and are the correct people to deal with any enquiry'.⁶³ Similarly in Durham, the proposal to establish a CAB under voluntary supervision was 'met with suspicion, the cry being that the local Councillor is the best person to advise a citizen.'⁶⁴ It is not clear whether the political composition of a local authority had anything to do with its willingness to work with the CAB. Often the decision was due to individual personalities. However, in other cases, local authority

⁶¹ TNA LAB/32/13, H.N. de Villiers to D.G/M.P, minute, 1 June 1944.

⁶² Hansard, HC (Series 5) Vol. 365, c.378W (9 October 1940); c.1136 (24 October 1940); cc.1197-8 (05 November 1940); Vol. 374 c.833 (7 October 1941).

⁶³ LMA AC/43/76/42, Report for Farnham, 31 August 1942.

⁶⁴ LMA AC/43/76/71, Report on CAB under the Durham Community Service Council by A. M. Carr, 29 April 1941.

support was given as help in kind, such as offices and equipment, and increased as the war progressed to include relief from rates and more substantial grants.⁶⁵

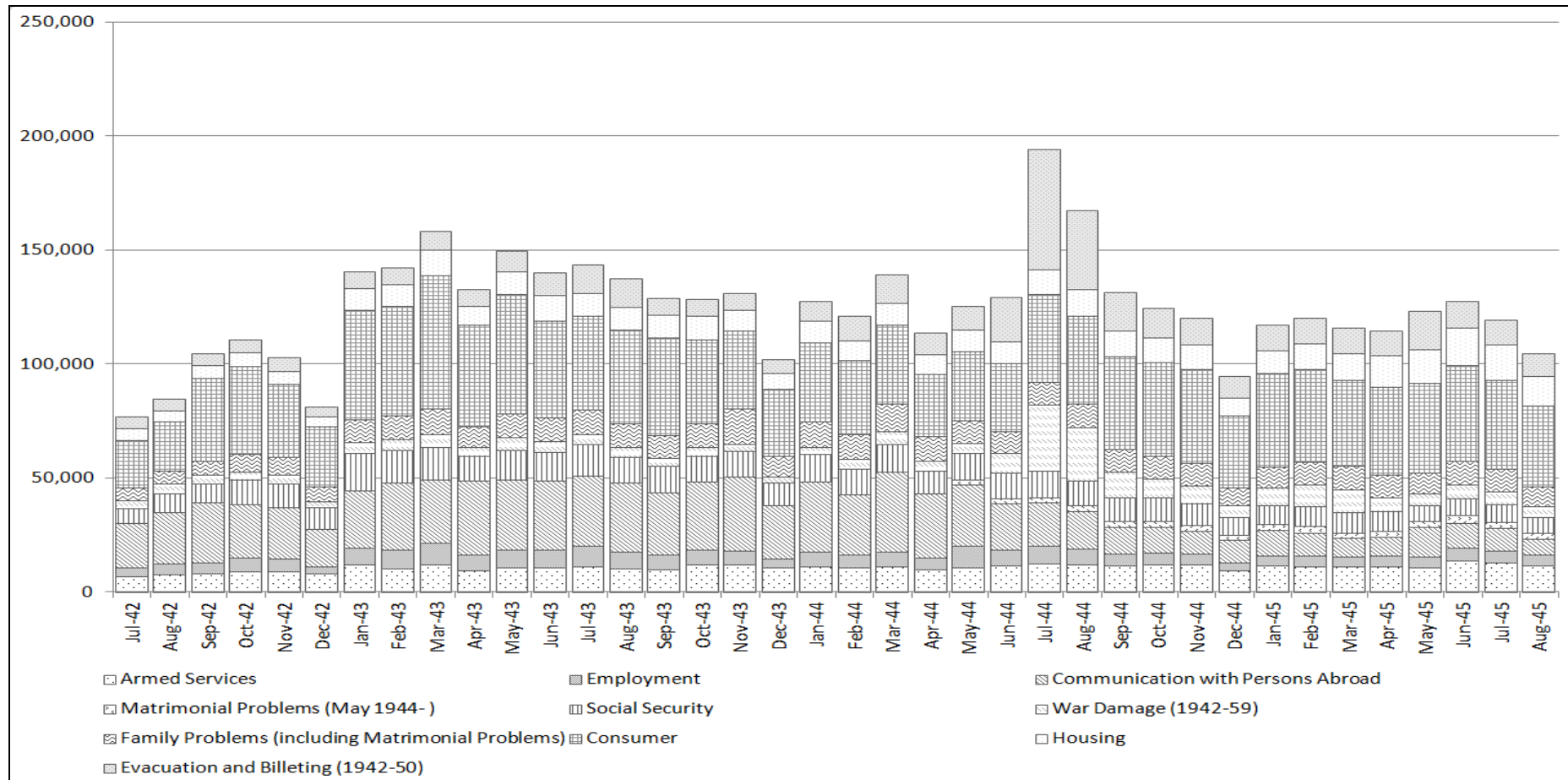
⁶⁵ TNA CAB 102/743, Citizens' Advice Bureaux: A Service of Advice and Help in Time of War, memo July 1939, 2-3.

3.5 Outcomes

National statistics are unavailable for the period from the outbreak of war to July 1942. After this date statistics were collected and analysed at a national level. Bureaux were required to submit statistics regularly, but many failed to do so, citing over-work as the reason. As U.M. Cormack commented, the types of queries in 1939 and 1940 'faithfully followed events.'⁶⁶ It is extremely difficult to generalise, as figures for types of enquiries varied by region, for example, south-west England's statistics were heavily skewed to reflect the many evacuees there. Perhaps unsurprisingly, demand for the CAB was high at the outbreak of war. Starting in September 1939, there were many questions arising from evacuation. Much CAB time was spent giving mothers and children lifts to catch the next school party of evacuees setting off. There were enquiries from old, disabled or infirm people, prematurely cleared from hospitals to make room for expected air-raid casualties. People wishing to be evacuated to places of their choice, who had places to go in the country were sent to the COS for help with fares. Gas masks were issued, and ARP instructions delivered. In London, during the initial operation of the evacuation scheme, demand was such that bureaux maintained a twenty-four hour service. As can be seen from Figure 1, the biggest problems related to consumption, e.g. rationing, as well as communication with people abroad and evacuation.

⁶⁶ Una M. Cormack, 'An Islington Experiment', *Social Work*, (1941) 424-32, 424.

Figure 1 Number and proportion of enquiries, July 1942 to August 1945.¹



¹ LMA AC 73/46/66; 67; 68; 69; 70; Statistical Abstracts, 1942-59.

By October, the first complaints began to come in from evacuees: mothers hearing that their children were being moved, needed clothes or were ill; pensioners worried about London rents; families who had paid to have their children privately evacuated from London wanted them back because of failing incomes. Help had to be found for people whose income had dwindled but whose liabilities for rent and leases and mortgages remained. Soldiers' wives with high rents and small allowances were particularly hard hit. According to H.M. Hallsworth, there were three main types of person unable to meet their rent, rates or mortgage payments: the ordinary weekly tenant, the formerly well-to-do householder with a three-year agreement, and shopkeepers. These were in difficulties through loss of employment or fall in earnings, or through increased expenses due to evacuation of part of the family or the failure to obtain payments from sub-tenants or lodgers.

Other problems at this early stage of the war related to the storage and removal of furniture. This was often necessitated for households by the evacuation or absence on war service of all or part of the family; or, in the case of businesses, of the trade stock or equipment when the business was failing due to war conditions. A large number of applicants suffered difficulties caused by inability to meet payments due under hire-purchase agreements. In 1936 it has been estimated that there were some twenty-six million hire-purchase agreements, of which roughly half were held by working-class households.¹ Landlords also suffered, especially small owners and those dependent on their property for their livelihood, when the tenant was unable to pay. Many problems had their origins in government failure to plan effectively for wartime. One such problem was the numerous enquiries about lost clothing coupons. Bureaux could do nothing until the Board of Trade released to the public their plan for the replacement of lost coupon books. Meanwhile there was no official advice other than to wait. The Board of Trade had not envisaged any great loss of coupons and had no plans ready for such occurrences.

As the war progressed, other questions and problems began to surface. A survey of the industrial north, the residential south, the Welsh ports of Newport and Cardiff and the

¹ Peter Scott, 'The Twilight World of Interwar British Hire Purchase', *Past and Present*, 177/1 (2002) 195-225, 197.

mining valleys in April 1940 showed that the shortage of suitable housing accommodation was a problem. Questions concerning discharge from the services also had begun to reach substantial proportions in most areas. This, the survey argued, was caused by the unsympathetic attitude of the authorities to men discharged either on medical grounds or to take up some essential civil employment. Questions concerning separation and family allowances paid to dependents of servicemen were the major problems brought to light by this survey. Problems resulting from delay, unsatisfactory dealing with illegitimate children, the method of computing the net unit income of the dependent, the difficult position of widows and the problems arising when older age groups were called up, were all reported to CABs. Problems resulting from the operation of the War Service Grants Advisory Committee (set up to mitigate financial hardship caused by service in any branch of H. M. Forces) were also reported.² A letter from the Birmingham Settlement Citizens' Advice Bureau to the Mass-Observation archive showed that in June 1940 there were fifty-six queries, of which one fifth related to rent, housing and mortgage and hire-purchase problems. The other main problems related to family dependents and special allowances, service questions, old age, supplementary and widow's pensions and family problems.

A heavy wave of air raid and evacuation problems arose in October and November 1940, and again in April and May 1941. CAB work came into its own with the Blitz. CAB often acted in response to the failure of government plans to deal with post-raid disruption and to provide effective information. Here CAB acted in a pioneering role in response to state failure over air raids for, as Ian McClaine illustrates, 'very little had been done in preparing suitable measures, chiefly because no one knew what to do.'³ In one town, where 32,000 people were rendered homeless in two nights, the total capacity of Rest Centres was only 4,000.⁴ In Southwark CAB, clothes rationing queries accounted for forty-three per cent of applications. Many other problems arose, such as the loneliness of old age pensioners. There was evidence in the Southwark bureau that

² LMA 4016/A/04/029, Report to the Ministry of Information of major problems encountered by CAB, by R. M. K. Buchanan, 5.

³ Ian McLaine, *Ministry of Morale: Home Front Morale and the Ministry of Information in World War II* (London: Allen, and Unwin, 1979).

⁴ National Council of Social Service, *Welfare Work in Bombed Areas* (London: National Council of Social Service, 1941), 4.

the expense of keeping two homes was a heavy burden where the wife and children were evacuated, or the husband transferred to another part of the country for essential war work. The call-up of women, fire-watching, income tax assessment, price control, soap and fuel rationing all gave rise to the questions brought into the bureau.⁵

Starting in 1942, the largest topics of enquiry nationally were: clothes rationing and communications with persons abroad. Service questions and family problems also featured prominently as did questions concerning utility furniture, price regulation and supply problems arising directly from the war. At the same time, an increasing number of queries were less directly concerned with the war, not least those concerned with health and personal problems. In 1943, the proportion of clothes rationing questions fell, as did those regarding prisoners of war, air raid damage questions and food rationing. The number of family problems rose mainly concerning evacuation and billeting, employment, rent housing and mortgage questions, service questions, and those concerning family dependants and service allowances. These trends continued through to 1944. Questions about evacuation and billeting reached a new high of 20,000 in June 1944, coinciding with the first V-1s. 1944 also saw the return of evacuees, and contingent needs of accommodation, bedding, fares, and costs of removal, utility dockets entitling people to mass-produced furniture, and war-damage claims.

The views of recipients on the help and service they received are difficult to piece together as evidence is scant. The press tended to print details of humorous enquiries. *Picture Post* referred to a case where a woman wanted to know where she could get tennis balls for her husband.⁶ We have already seen how CABs tended to operate with the presumption that individuals wanted advice given by someone with personal integrity and personal responsibility. Bureaux, it was assumed, stood in a different relationship to the public from other forms of social work and government departments.⁷ The gratitude of individuals in many cases was expressed in material

⁵ LMA ACC/3158/Uncatalogued/ June 1944-Late '50s/ Box2 'Southwark Citizens Advice Bureau Summary of Records', May 1941.

⁶ *Picture Post*, 18/7, 13 February 1943, 22-24.

⁷ Enid Eichholz, 'The Function of Interpretation in CAB Work', *Social Work: A Quarterly View of Family Casework*, 2/8 (1943), 311-315, 312. The later wife of psychoanalyst Michael Balint, Enid Flora Balint-Edmonds (1903-1994) was a psychoanalyst and

terms: 'I would willingly give you £4,000,000 if I had it, for your help, but as I haven't any amount of money I can only thank you with all my heart.' Another bureau helped an old lady who was unable to write letters herself, to obtain the Army gratuity due in respect of her soldier son killed in the Far East. On receiving the money – about £120 – the applicant set aside a small sum for the purpose of buying a 'plant for the young ladies'.⁸

Statistics on the users of CAB services are limited and therefore impressionistic. Southwark CAB conducted a brief survey of enquirers in March 1945. The results show that, for that area of London, just over half of all enquiries came from wage-earners normally at work. The second largest group of enquirers were housewives, (one quarter) followed by retired people and the unemployed.⁹ Certainly, the CAB argued that its users were from all backgrounds:

Every day into Bureaux all over the country stream citizens of all types of educational and social background, seeking advice, asking for information. Some, perhaps full of enthusiasm and eagerness, wanting to remove some obstacle that is standing in their way, but unable to comprehend it, on the verge of feeling injured and thwarted; others with age-old grievances, expecting rebuff, surprised at courtesy, unwilling to believe that unbiased and disinterested listeners are at hand.¹⁰

A brief analysis of the problems reported suggests a distinction between those affecting middle- and working class individuals and households. The social work journal *Social Welfare* presented some research findings in 1941 suggesting that in poorer districts, people needed guidance through the regulations about ration books. In better off districts, there were questions about maximum prices and the method of bringing

welfare worker. After graduating from the LSE having specialized in public administration, she organized the Citizens' Advice Bureaux in London on behalf of the Family Welfare Association. See Philip Hopkins, 'Balint, Michael Maurice (1896–1970)', *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, Oxford University Press, 2004 [<http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/51076>, accessed 23 Aug 2012]

⁸ William Beveridge, *Voluntary Action: A Report on Methods of Social Advance* (London: George Allen & Unwin Ltd., 1948), 285.

⁹ LMA ACC/3158 Uncatalogued/ June 1944-Late 1950s/ Box 2, Southwark Citizens Advice Bureau Summary of Special Records, March 1945.

¹⁰ Enid Eichholz, 'The Function of Interpretation in CAB Work', *Social Work: A Quarterly Review of Family Casework*, 2/8 (1943), 311-315, 313.

complaints to the Price Regulation Committee, with shoppers coming in, 'hot from a quarrel with a grocer or butcher, to know "the rights of the matter"'.¹¹

The *Daily Telegraph* outlined one problem affecting middle class individuals: 'very few people know that if evacuees who have been billeted upon them damage their furniture or infect their home they have the right to claim damages from the local authority.'¹² With regard to the provision of grants by the War Service Advisory Committee, it was commented that the committee was imposing hardships on households where the civilian's income was high due to his incurring justifiable liabilities for such articles as refrigerator, motor car, or school fees: 'This imposes very definite hardships on those who have been endeavouring to raise their standard of living.'¹³ By 1938, only one person in fifteen was a car owner, and, due to the high cost of vehicles relative to the average weekly wage, and the limited extent of hire purchase sales, car ownership was still largely confined to men in the middle classes.¹⁴ This lends some credence to the view that the CAB was used by most sections of society.

Were the public distrustful of officialdom? A chief complaint among enquirers was about the dissatisfaction and frustration of being sent from one place to another, and still not finding out what they wanted to know.¹⁵ In Plymouth CAB, the example was given of a thirty-year old female who wanted to find out how to visit her evacuated relatives. She was sent from the library to the corporation depot and from there to the Western National office, to find them bombed. She discovered the bus service to get to their temporary offices only to find that the service had been cancelled.

For those hostile to the workings of bureaucracy in wartime (and there were many), the CAB held a fundamental role as a counterweight to the cumbersome apparatus of state

¹¹ Hilda Jones and Charles F. Carter, 'The Citizens' Queries', *Social Welfare* 4/8 (1941) 161-65, 163.

¹² *The Daily Telegraph*, 4 January 1940.

¹³ LMA 4016/A/04/029, Report to the Ministry of Information of major problems encountered by CAB, by R. M. K. Buchanan, 9.

¹⁴ Amanda Root, 'Transport and communications', in A. H. Halsey and Josephine Webb (eds.), *Twentieth-Century British Social Trends* (Basingstoke: Macmillans, 2000), 437-68, 445.

¹⁵ Mass Observation Archive, University of Sussex (MOA), TC/66/15/B Plymouth CAB JS, 26 August 1941.

control, and by protecting the citizen's individual rights. The CAB was essentially a democratic project, concerned with the socialisation of the individual. This was not lost on the *Manchester Guardian*, which reported in January 1940: 'to the extent that it teaches people to fend for themselves, [the CAB] is the more valuable than if it completely absolved people from the trouble of finding out what they want to know.'¹⁶ U. M. Cormack, a social worker, argued that:

When information is among the first services you provide, you are thinking of your clients as fellow citizens, not helpless victims; you expect them to take their share again in the common effort as quickly as possible, and you give them information as to how to do it. What you want from them is action – civic, or social, action. The principal object, in fact, of many of the wartime services has been to enable each individual to do his duty as a citizen, his social duty.¹⁷

During wartime, these rights were, unknown to many, threatened by the growth of the state and increasing centralisation. This change was noted by PEP:

Regional reorganization of essential services is gaining strength, and local organization is losing it. The whole-time administrator responsible to a higher authority is replacing the spare-time committee-man responsible to voters who rarely vote either for or against him. It is becoming more urgent to find out accurately what people think of the public services and to take trouble to remedy sources of friction.¹⁸

'Regionalism in administration not allied with regional consciousness', Wyndham Deedes, Vice-Chairman of the NCSS wrote in a letter to *The Times* in January 1940, 'could be a highly dangerous experiment, since it would still further isolate the administrator from the sentiment of the public which he exists to serve.'¹⁹ Viscount Bledisloe told the House of Lords in February 1944 of this isolation:

¹⁶ The *Manchester Guardian*, 17 January 1940.

¹⁷ Una M. Cormack, 'Developments in Case-work', in A. F. C. Bourdillon (ed.), *Voluntary Social Services: Their Places in the Modern State* (London: Methuen & Co. Ltd., 1945), 86-117, 111. See also Richard Titmuss, *Problems of Social Policy* (London: HMSO, 1950), 292.

¹⁸ 'London Under Bombing', *PEP*, 8/169 (1941), 2.

¹⁹ *The Times*, 20 January 1941, 5.

When you are dealing with the great number of people not very educated, certainly not learned in the law, who come to the Citizens' Advice Bureaux asking all sorts of questions affecting their rights – their rights in this democratic country under Statutes passed by the Imperial Parliament which are well nigh unintelligible to them and are only rendered intelligible when they can consult some legal authority.²⁰

Such concerns were renewed by the realisation that wartime Government was capable of displaying coercive attitudes to the bombed-out, derived from the 'Poor Law mentality'. This coercive attitude, prevalent at the start of the war, was highlighted by Tom Harrisson. 'The Ministry of Health', he wrote, 'even added a retired Inspector-General of Police to the "Relief in Kind" Committee, with special responsibility for advising on "mass control" and discipline of the potentially turbulent.'²¹

These activities took on renewed vigour during wartime as community mindedness and citizenship became important weapons in the ideological war being waged with the Axis powers. Democracy was being tested, and as PEP argued in 1939, 'In war, and still more in peace, we can no longer be content to leave the central values of our Western civilisation undefined, and to allow compromises to be made and institutions to grow up regardless of their bearing on the maintenance of principles vital to our liberties.'²² The NCSS set out its definition of citizenship in its Annual Report for 1940/41:

A democratic society is strong in proportion to the number of its citizens who share responsibility in the nation's affairs. The voluntary social services, based as they are on local initiative and individual enterprise, give many thousands of men and women their chance of developing capacity for responsible action as citizens of a free county. [...] Each man and woman who plays a part in them derives new sources of strength, which give staying power to the nation in its present struggle, and will provide creative energy for the tasks which must follow victory.²³

²⁰ Hansard HL (Series 5) Vol.130, c.679, 3 February 1944.

²¹ Tom Harrison, *Living Through the Blitz* (London: Collins, 1976), 40.

²² 'The Home Front', *PEP*, 7/153 (1939) 1-14, p. 2.

²³ National Council of Social Service, *Annual Report 1940/41* (London: National Council of Social Service, 1941), 3.

The CAB was a conduit for such creative energy, and one of its objects was 'to play a part, in common with other social organizations as opportunities arise in the course of its work, in bringing to the notice of enquirers the opportunities and responsibilities of civic service.'²⁴ Its ideological project was the liberal one of inclusion.

While seeking to prevent the fragmentation of social life, the CAB was increasingly heralded by its supporters as symbolising the reaction against the ever-greater centralisation of society, by contrasting its representation of the local or heterogeneous with the central, or homogenous. The CAB represented the local community against the unifying force of the central state apparatus. Local knowledge, CAB advocates and leaders argued, was the defining feature of an advice service, as opposed to a centrally run, official information service. Each CAB represented, through its workers, local committee and panel of experts, a microcosm of an ideal community. It was this ideal type, not always achieved in reality, which would create the 'personal relationship', necessary to combat centralised, anonymous bureaucracy. As Raymond Wadsworth, Chair of Birmingham CAB Regional Committee suggested:

CAB provides a new type of service which could be said to have had as its fore-runner the personal relationship between the people of a village and their squire, doctor and minister. In the ideal situation the villager could choose from these three the one most suitable to the problem in hand. This relationship has in the main disappeared with the increasing size of the village and hardly ever existed in the city.²⁵

²⁴ National Council of Social Service, *The Principles of the Citizens' Advice Bureau Service* (London: National Council of Social Service, 1941).

²⁵ Raymond V. Wadsworth, *The Story of the Citizens' Advice Bureau in Birmingham 1939-69* (Birmingham: Birmingham Citizens' Advice Bureau, 1971), 53-4.

3.6. Conclusion

Many voluntary organizations, including the CAB, had what could be described as a good war. The President of the NCSS, Sir Malcolm Stewart, told the 1945 Annual General Meeting that his organization had emerged from the Second World War as a better instrument for social welfare.²⁶ The Second World War saw the creation of new voluntary organizations, some of them created by government initiative and entirely state funded. The Women's Voluntary Service was one example of such an organization. Other newly created organizations, such as Citizens' Advice Bureaux and the Old People's Welfare Committees, developed from within, and were run by, existing voluntary organizations. More generally, the war years gave greater scope for service among the civilian population at home. Among other things, voluntary organizations assisted in the process of evacuation of people from cities, and in the establishment of rest centres for those made homeless by bombing.

Unsurprisingly, the CAB argued that it was the living embodiment of a contemporary voluntary organization, willing to work alongside the state as a junior partner. Its methods and principles were discussed and pored over by social workers and social commentators. The speed of its development and its popularity were held up as signalling the voluntary sector's efficiency and its shedding of odious characteristics of charity's past. It held a special place for trained volunteers, willing to educate themselves in social legislation. The CAB volunteer would, it was assumed, be held in high regard by the community it served, offering something distinctive that the trained professional social worker could not. Meanwhile the social worker could helpfully lead a bureau, recognising when a case needed specialist or professional care and attention. The growing social work profession, as well as existing professions, such as lawyers and doctors, and ordinary volunteers, were in combination demonstrating their growing awareness of the needs of the community, as well as the individual.

But how true were these claims to novelty? Wartime conditions and the disruption of private lives provided the stimulus to growth of the CAB, as well as the suspicion with which most people approached the state. Certainly as important factor was the growth

²⁶ LMA 4016/IS/A/01/007(1), Minutes of the Annual General Meeting (AGM), 11 December 1945.

of governmental regulations that sought to limit the impact of wartime disturbances on people's lives. The popularity and growth of CAB could also be seen as symptomatic of the privatising effect of war. In some cases, though not necessarily in rural close-knit communities, it was possible for visitors to raise their issues in anonymity. The CAB's popularity can also be seen as evidence of the distrust shown towards officialdom and a general distrust of authority of much of the population in Britain.²⁷

Concerning its motivation as a social organization, the CAB continued to echo idealist and quasi-idealist themes.²⁸ 'Community' continued to be used as a normative concept implying liberal inclusion of diverse interests and individuals. Its goals and aims suggested that it was necessary to heal division or sectionalism in society - a trend that had been increasingly prominent in the inter-war years, which accelerated during the war years.²⁹ Many forces associated with modernity were seen to be threatening to the community, including class antagonism, increased centralisation of government; professionalization and specialisation; and, perhaps most importantly, the ignorance of the citizen. The scenario most feared by CAB advocates was an atomistic, individualized society, with citizens left to fend for themselves against an increasingly oppressive state monolith. Consequently, it sought to defend 'community' against the seemingly corrosive forces of modernity and the large scale integration of society through the process of specialisation, formalisation and increased mobility of people and goods – processes, it was argued, that had been accelerated by the Second World War.

Each bureau, it was hoped, would provide for close co-operation between the voluntary organizations, local authorities and central government. They provided a corporatist mechanism where the administrator, the practitioner, and the public could act in combination as watchdogs of the state, protectors of individual rights and promoters of the common good. The creators of the CAB saw it as an intermediary

²⁷ José Harris, 'Did British workers want the welfare state? GDH Cole's survey of 1942', in Jay Winter (ed.), *The Working Class in Modern British History: Essays in Honour of Henry Pelling* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1983), 200-14.

²⁸ José Harris, 'Political Thought and the Welfare state 1870-1940: An Intellectual Framework for British Social Policy', *Past and Present*, 135 (1992), 116-41.

²⁹ Matthew Grimley, *Citizenship, Community, and the Church of England: Liberal Anglican Theories of the state between the Wars* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 2004).

between the state and the citizen, a buffer between a centralised machinery of wartime controls and the individual. On the receiving end was a population distrustful of bureaucracy and 'officialdom', yet willing to approach an institution that appeared 'independent', and therefore unbiased. The local, community defined nature of individual Bureaux was heralded as the main feature of the service, a feature that was necessary in an era of centralisation, mass bureaucracy and large organizations and institutions.

In theory, the ideal CAB would cultivate diversity, thus providing an outlet for the wishes and desires of a number of interested parties, without allowing any one of them to dominate proceedings. This reflected pluralist understandings of community and was reflected in general discussions of voluntary associations and their place in democratic Britain. Underneath this common commitment to community as a buffer to the state, however, a number of different groups were striving for private gain. Concerns about the increasing complexity of modern life, the relationship of experts to practitioners, and the relation of individuals to the state, masked the motives and anxieties of a number of different groups.

One important group was the slowly emerging social work profession whose esteem jumped sharply during wartime, especially in the eyes of central government.³⁰ In one sense, the CAB could be seen as a pressure group for the developing social work profession. This is especially evident in bureaux run by the COS. The CAB movement appealed to a nascent social work profession that distinguished itself from the unskilled volunteers of years past. As leaders of individual bureaux, social workers could claim their usefulness to the state, and to society as a whole. They could employ their skills to act as social researchers for the state, and as guardians of the welfare state, interpreting it to citizens and explaining the law. In one sense this marked a reaction to the developing movement of social work away from questions deemed central to social reform.

In each bureau, holding the social worker in check from over specialisation and detachment from the wider social problems affecting the community, was the trained

³⁰ Richard Titmuss, *Problems of Social Policy* (London: HMSO, 1950), 288.

volunteer worker. The ordinary citizen, with experience of everyday life, could offer a different kind of contribution to advising the citizen, than the trained professional social worker. The involvement of volunteers was, it was assumed by many in the CAB leadership ensured by the overwhelming flood of good neighbourliness, which it was assumed had accompanied wartime hostilities. The new type of volunteer could be of any social background. With some basic training they would be 'semi-professional' in outlook. As Margaret Mead argued:

In dealing with human relations rather than with things, the voluntary worker, who is an ordinary man or woman without special professional training, has a different contribution to make in which he or she does not replace at a higher or lower level of efficiency the professional worker but contributes a different sort of skill, a special human experience of living.³¹

In terms of social change, the CAB's composition reflected a growing, but diversifying, middle class. CAB ideology reflected a reconstituted middle class identity which attempted to bridge the gap between the older traditional professional sense of hierarchy which relied on cultural superiority, and the growing number of middle class professionals and officials whose sense of superiority was based on expertise, specialism and technical knowledge. As well as stressing tact and courtesy, the new middle class professional had expert knowledge.³² The new type of professionalism was more accepting of women than the older sort. Although the CAB appealed to all members of society to volunteer, the CAB attracted a large proportion of the lower middle-classes. Town clerks, librarians, retired civil servants and schoolteachers, and their wives, made up many of the volunteer workers, particularly in urban areas. Many workers were educated women. Voluntary work, which stressed expertise, knowledge and efficiency (as well as what might be deemed 'managerial' skills, or experience in human relations) appealed to this growing section of society. As well as affirmed solidarity with the working class, CAB work also encouraged a certain sense of

³¹ Margaret Mead, 'Some Significant Aspects of British Social Practice', confidential revised draft, 25 Oct. 1943: Margaret Mead Papers, Library of Congress, E155. My thanks to Dr Peter Mandler for highlighting this reference.

³² David Edgerton, *Warfare State: Britain, 1920-70* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005).

superiority. The ignorant, confused, or muddled citizen was taken as the archetypal enquirer.

Another possibility is that the CAB's growth in wartime demonstrated the growing middle-class interest in a 'correctly crafted welfare state'.³³ In a sense the middle classes were setting themselves up as gatekeepers to the welfare state. They were to be the focal point of the community: interpreting the state to the individual; describing the individual to the state; translating the centre to the periphery; applying the general to the particular; referring the individual to the expert. In a sense such developments could be seen as constituting a means for the middle classes to reassert their link with sections of the working class. In the words of Mike Savage, bureaucratic organization was 'harnessed to an ethos which celebrated a form of cross-class populism which sought to eliminate patronage and elitism through the formalization of procedure.'³⁴ Guidance on how to interact with the state required knowledge and trusting relationships between advisers and individuals. Lower middle class, barely trained and young officials or experts with no experience of life, on the other hand, could not be trusted. The middle classes had traditionally been distrustful of the state and now sought to apply their principles in interpreting it to the rest of society.

³³ Peter Baldwin, *The Politics of Social Solidarity, Class Bases of the European Welfare state 1875-1975*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1990), 26.

³⁴ Mike Savage, 'The Popularity of Bureaucracy: Involvement in Voluntary Associations', in Paul Du Gay (ed.) in *The Values of Bureaucracy* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005) 309-334.

4. Adjusting to austerity, 1945-51

4.1. Introduction

With the arrival of peace in 1945, many workers within the CAB expected the organization to close its doors and gradually wind down its operations. It was envisaged that the problems of wartime would cease relatively quickly and normality would return. But the CAB leadership shunned any notion of winding up its services. When the organization was created in 1939, its leaders and contemporaries recognised that the outbreak of war had triggered the creation of a service that was long overdue. Similarly, it was assumed by the leaders of the organization that its services would be required amid the confusion surrounding the end of the conflict, and particularly the demobilisation of the armed services. Workers within the service also expressed concern at the potential negative impacts on family life of six years of disruption of relationships and forced separations. Therefore, in 1945, CAB leaders imagined a post-war scenario in which free information and advice on legal and social problems would continue to be crucially important for the individual in their relationships with each other, and with the post-war state.

Despite the popularity and success of the war years, the period from 1945 to 1951 was troublesome for the CAB. The confidence of the immediate post-war period did not translate into sustained growth in the Citizens Advice Bureaux. However, the service continued to operate as the demand for independent information increased due to the growing complexity of state legislation. In fulfilling the new social needs of peacetime, the CAB, instead of seeing itself as just an emergency service, began to consider its role as a normal social service. The period was a lean one in terms of the financial support available for voluntary organizations, and this was especially so for the central headquarters within the NCSS. This was largely due to a post-war hangover effect, with voluntary organizations having fattened themselves on government funds, and expanded with little oversight from the centre. In contrast with the later history of the service, the central headquarters had very little control over what went on in local bureaux.

This chapter considers the period immediately following the Second World War, which were years of transition for the CAB and for most voluntary organizations. There was a contraction of the services provided by the central headquarters following the withdrawal of government funding in 1950. As well as financial pressures, the CAB argued that it was facing another challenge in recruiting and training enough voluntary workers of adequate quality to maintain the 1,000 or so bureaux in existence in 1945. Following the ending of hostilities, the number of people using the bureaux dropped, but then remained steady. This reflected the return to relative normality following the disruptions of wartime. Yet the problems addressed by bureaux were of a different nature than during the war years, and they often took up more staff time to try to resolve. Despite the arrival of a government provided alternative – the Resettlement Advice Office – the bureaux continued to be popular.

An important development was the changing role of the CAB and its relationship with the post-war welfare state. This chapter explores the changing organization of the CAB, and how it adapted to the post-war economic, social and political environment and to new post-war problems. It does this through examining the debate at the CAB headquarters about the future role of the service alongside the statutory social services. The next section considers how voluntarism fitted into political debates and the wider political culture during the post-war decade. How did Labour and Conservatives view the CAB and wider voluntary action? The continuing need for voluntary action was generally recognised, including many on the left of the Labour Party.¹ Both William Beveridge, and GDH Cole saw a continuing role for voluntary action, and specifically for the CAB.²

Historians such as Martin Francis and Steven Fielding have considered the political culture of the immediate post-war years but few have considered the role of voluntary

¹ Nicholas Deakin and Justin Davis Smith, 'Labour, charity and voluntary action: the myth of hostility', in Matthew Hilton and James McKay ed. *The Ages of Voluntarism: How we got to the Big Society* (London: Oxford University Press, 2011), 69-93.

² G. D. H. Cole, 'A Retrospect of the History of Voluntary Social Service', in A. F. C. Bourdillon (ed.), *Voluntary Social Service: Their Place in the Modern state* (London: Methuen & Co. Ltd., 1945), 11-30; William Beveridge, *Voluntary Action: A Report on Methods of Social Advance* (London: George Allen & Unwin Ltd, 1948).

organizations such as the CAB in that culture.³ Ina Zweiniger-Bargielowska has considered the politics of middle class housewives and their position as supporters of the Conservative Party.⁴ Martin Francis has demonstrated that Labour's socialism was a fluid and unstable synthesis of ideological traditions. Its brand of socialism believed in social harmony, social service and community consciousness. Labour did not define socialism purely in economic terms. Michael Young, the former head of the Labour Party Research Department, and author of the 1945 Labour manifesto raised the question of human relations in politics, and considered how best to bridge the gap between administrators and the administered.⁵ Labour were concerned with forging a nation of participants, as a means of bridging the democratic gap between planners and people and reconciling freedom and a planned socio-economic sphere. Fielding, Thompson and Tiratsoo, however, have argued that most people remained preoccupied with their private lives, and that the Labour party was mistaken to believe that voters shared its ethical vision.⁶ James Hinton has criticised the approach of this so-called 'apathy' school, arguing that it underestimates the extent of popular engagement with the political processes of the 1940s. It is wrong, he argues, to assume that the only barrier to the success of the Labour government was the indifference of the masses, for post-war social democrats, exercised 'moral and intellectual leadership', with an active and moralistic collectivism.⁷

In 1937 the annual volume of public general statutes occupied just over a thousand pages; statutory rule and orders for the same period occupied about 2,400 pages. In 1947 the two volumes of statutes contained over 2,000 pages; no few than 2,916

³ Steven Fielding, Peter Thompson and Nick Tiratsoo, *"England Arise!" The Labour Party and Popular Politics in 1940s Britain* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1995); Martin Francis, *Ideas and Politics under Labour, 1945-51: Building a New Britain* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1997).

⁴ Ina Zweiniger-Bargielowska, *Austerity in Britain: Rationing, Controls and Consumption, 1939-1955* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000).

⁵ Martin Francis, *Ideas and Politics under Labour, 1945-51: Building a New Britain* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1997).

⁶ Steven Fielding, Peter Thompson and Nick Tiratsoo, *"England Arise!" The Labour Party and Popular Politics in 1940s Britain* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1995).

⁷ James Hinton, '1945 and the Apathy School', *History Workshop Journal*, 43 (Spring 1997) 266-73; see also David Marquand 'Moralists and Hedonists' in David Marquand and Anthony Seldon (eds.), *The Ideas that Shaped Post-War Britain* (London: Fontana, 1996), 5-28.

statutory instruments were issued in the numbered series, filling three volumes.⁸ Back in 1943, the government had urged that when making regulations, that provision should be made for simplicity, publication and accessibility. As the result of parliamentary pressure the importance of these factors was drawn to the attention of all government departments in April 1943. Legislation followed in 1946 through the Statutory Instruments Act; this was designed to ensure adequate publicity for statutory instruments in and out of Parliament.⁹

A contemporary social survey by sociologist Tom Bottomore investigated the class and social composition of voluntary workers in a 1950 survey of the voluntary organizations in the mainly middle class town of 'Squirebridge'. He found that the leadership of voluntary organizations were mostly from the managerial, professional, technical and executive classes of both sexes. He also found that for organizations that were not strictly charitable, which provided social services that were not statutory but were closely related to statutory bodies - such as the road safety committee - the social composition of the leadership was similar.¹⁰ Bottomore recognised that organizations rarely included members of lower level occupations, but that that occupational status was not the only criterion for gaining respect within an organization. For a voluntary organization with a specific purpose, skill at the work in hand was recognised as being more important than status.

⁸ E. C. S. Wade and G. Godfrey Phillips, *Constitutional Law: An Outline of the Law and Practice of the Constitution, Including Central and Local Government and the Constitutional Relations of the British Commonwealth* (5th edn., London: Longmans, Green and Co.), 352.

⁹ Ibid. 351-62.

¹⁰ Rosalind C. Chambers, 'A Study of Three Voluntary Organizations', in D. V. Glass (ed.), *Social Mobility in Britain* (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1954), 383-487, 383-5.

4.2. Aims

The parent organization of the CAB, the NCSS, began to plan for the post-war period well before the war was finished. In 1941, it set up a Central Planning Committee to rethink the fundamental aims of voluntary action and social service in the light of the decline of unemployment, the ideological threat of totalitarianism and rapidly changing social conditions. The future role of the CAB was considered in these discussions and plans. The need for adjustment was clear and this realisation was couched in optimistic and opportunistic terms, as this comment from the 1945 draft annual report of the NCSS shows:

It is clear of course that in every field where the state and the community meet there must be progressive readjustment of functions and services, but a thoughtful examination of the problems of social life will show in a great many spheres of activity that, the more the state does, the greater should be the spontaneous response from the citizen through his own organization.¹¹

The Committee's machinations led to the publication in 1944 of a report entitled, *The Future Purpose and Organization of the National Council of Social Service*. This stressed the importance of skilled social work in modern society, along with the necessity for good and progressive relationships between voluntary organizations and statutory bodies. It suggested that, as well as maintaining and strengthening its traditional role of co-ordinating its associated groups and voluntary organizations, the NCSS should seek to extend its services of research on social problems, publications, and information. Finally, the report stressed the importance of the continued role for voluntary organizations and social work, not as 'benevolent extras' to the welfare state, but as a means to 'help forward the advance along the whole front of social life.' Post-war social work, would, be 'a necessary instrument of social regeneration.'¹²

The statements contained in this document can be seen as direct response to criticisms of charitable work and voluntary organizations both in the past and in contemporary political circles. Charitable acts of social work were vulnerable to caricature and attack from those, particularly on the political left, who argued that they carried with them

¹¹ LMA 4016/IS/A/01/007(1) Draft Annual Report 1945.

¹² LMA 4016/IS/A/01/007(1) Annual General Meeting, Future Purposes and Organization of the NCSS, 14 December 1944.

paternalist values, were condescending and patronizing. To many civil servants, meanwhile, voluntary forms of welfare provision were thought to be patchy, inefficient and muddled. The NCSS report represented an attempt to broaden the existing concept of social service away from the older pre-war charitable tradition focussing on the relief of the individual in distress, toward one that embraced the 'common efforts of the community to enrich normal life.'¹³

Perhaps unsurprisingly, the CAB also remained optimistic that its wartime service would continue into the post-war period. As H. M. Hallsworth noted in a report as early as December 1939 '[...] there is a definite feeling that the bureaux will have a definite and valuable function to perform in peace-time.' The report went on to say that this view was borne out by three things. First, that enquiries did not solely relate to problems caused by the war; second, such bodies as the Charity Organization Society had always maintained an advice service as part of their normal work; and, third, 'the increasing complexity of our social life makes it harder for people of scant education and narrow experience to come to a wise decision when confronted with difficulty in their daily lives.'¹⁴ The CAB headquarters, along with many voluntary organizations, began planning for the post-war world in 1943, when the Central Committee agreed to the suggestion of the Secretary, Dorothy Keeling, that she be authorised to prepare a memorandum on the future of the service.¹⁵

The CAB was bound up with the national concern with post-war planning. It was widely accepted that information centres would be required in some form once the war was over. Much of this planning was conducted on the assumption that wartime conditions would continue into the post-war years. Much of the CAB's work was focused on establishing itself as an essential part of peacetime community life. To do this, it first focused on its function of easing the transition to civilian life. Wartime regulations continued after the ending of hostilities, as did the shortages of fuel, food

¹³ Margaret Brasnett, *Voluntary Social Action: A History of the National Council of Social Service* (London: National Council of Social Service, 1969).

¹⁴ LMA 4016/A/04/029, *Report on Citizens Advice Bureaux* by H. M. Hallsworth, December 1939.

¹⁵ LMA AC 73/46/10/CAB Future 1943-4, Extract from minutes of meeting of CAB Committee, 22 January 1943.

and clothing. The taxation system continued to cover a wide range of the population, and tax legislation itself remained complicated. The demobilization of the army occurred at the same time as the relocation of huge sections of the civilian population in Britain. There was also a massive housing shortage prompted by the destruction of housing stock.

In this context, the CAB would, its leaders argued, act as a liaison between the various departments of the statutory authorities, and advise those citizens whose needs fell outside Government rules and regulations, or explain to them the provisions made for their benefit.¹⁶ There would, it was envisaged, be a continuing need for advice and information, given the continued responsibility of the state for many aspects of people's lives. With the welfare state taking care of the bare minimum levels of subsistence, the CAB would continue to consider the totality of social development and the wider impact of post-war social and economic planning on the community. Its role as an interpreter of authority to the citizen, and interpreter of the citizen to the state, would be more important to democratic government in the post-war period.

The CAB would also, it was argued, take on the function of social research. As well as answering the increasing number of questions regarding the new social legislation after the war, it would deal with the increasing number of personal and domestic problems coming to their attention. CAB headquarters would keep the state informed of popular reactions to current conditions and recent legislation. The CAB Committee also believed that the service had the potential to aid legislators, officers of government departments and local authorities, by making available a true picture of the lives of individual citizens, their reactions to the new services which were being set up for them, their efforts to contend with continuing shortages, restrictions and difficulties and, in short, by providing, as Lord Beveridge saw it, a window through which social workers (with central and local government officers and many others) could look at the world.¹⁷

¹⁶ LMA AC 73/46/10/CAB Future 1943-4, Report of meeting to reconsider the future of the Citizens Advice Bureau, 13 August 1943, 3.

¹⁷ TNA 7/789 NCSS Report of the Citizens Advice Bureaux Central Committee for 1948, 21 February 1949.

The way in which the CAB conceived of people's post-war social needs can be divided into two. On the one hand, the work would be a natural development of wartime work: for example, advising mothers and wives on the return of relatives serving overseas. At the same time, post-war work would involve creating or interpreting the constructive opportunities for citizens.¹⁸ This more positive role was highlighted in an article in a September 1945 issue of the National Association of Local Government Officers' journal. It argued that CAB workers could actively rebuild the lives of their fellow citizens by collecting information on opportunities for leisure activities in the neighbourhood, both educational and recreational.¹⁹

This wider purpose of shaping society reflected what Jose Harris identifies as the wider belief shared by many writers about British society at the time that, despite the widespread damage, disruption, and scarcity wrought by the war, the forces of large-scale societal change could be steered into constructive channels.²⁰ At a CAB Conference in the North West, Dorothy Keeling, the Secretary warned that, when the war ended, 'people would have not fewer problems but more, and more complex, because settling down to normal work, to home and to community after these years of exciting effort for a common purpose would involve subtler strains and stresses than there had been in the change-over from peace to war.'²¹

CAB headquarters were not alone in holding these views. The Rushcliffe Report of the Committee on Legal Aid and Legal Advice argued that the service should continue into peacetime:

We are of the opinion that the Citizens' Advice Bureaux should continue their useful functions after the war. We are satisfied that large numbers of people needing help and advice will turn to those Bureaux in the first place

¹⁸ LMA AC 73/46/10 CAB Future 1943-4, 'Future work of the Citizens Advice Bureaux', November 1945.

¹⁹ LMA AC 73/46/10 CAB Future 1943-4, 'Brave new world', article for the journal of the National Association of Local Government Officers, September 1945.

²⁰ José Harris, 'Tradition and Transformation: Society and Civil Society in Britain, 1945-2001' in Kathleen Burk (ed.), *The British Isles Since 1945* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2006), 91-126, 91.

²¹ Margaret Brasnett, *The Story of the Citizens' Advice Bureaux* (London: National Council of Social Service, 1964), 21.

which can advise the applicant where he can obtain legal advice if that is all he needs or put him in touch with the Secretary of the Local Committee if he needs legal aid.²²

Moreover, the CAB was considered essential by all those who wished to develop the social rights of citizenship to their maximum. This included many within the Labour government. By 1945, Michael Freeden has argued, citizenship had become an enterprise of optimisation. Instead of the authoritative unlocking by those in the know, of individual capacities most conducive to their good and to the good of the state, democratic participation became essential to defining the qualities of citizenship.²³ The sociologist T. H. Marshall gave a significant and influential description of citizenship in a 1949 lecture entitled, 'Citizenship and social class'.²⁴ Marshall emphasised the move from contract to status in society and the rise of ideas of equality which had shifted in emphasis from the duties to the rights of citizenship. In an article in *Political Quarterly* in 1949 reviewing Beveridge's report on voluntary action, Marshall went so far as to set out his own analysis of the evolving relationship between voluntary action, the state and the citizen. Marshall recognised the importance of the CAB in 'helping to bridge the gulf between the public and the bureaucracy.' He went on:

Representative government alone will not create a true democracy if the citizen cringes before the official, or if he sullenly resents his authority. The establishment of a proper co-operative relationship between the public and the bureaucracy is a matter of vital importance, and the statutory services provide the main field of operations. The citizen must learn to respect the authority of the official as something without which he could not discharge his responsibilities, but at the same time to regard him as his friend and his servant. Close co-operation between the statutory and voluntary services is a powerful instrument for the realization of this ideal.²⁵

The CAB considered itself a democratic body with aims whose achievement would benefit society. The underlying principle of the CAB was essentially democratic –

²² *Report of the Committee on Legal Aid and Legal Advice* (1944-5; Cmd 6641), 39, para. 185.

²³ Michael Freeden, 'Civil Society and the Good Citizen: Competing Conceptions of Citizenship in Twentieth-Century Britain, in José Harris (ed.), *Civil Society in British History: Ideas, Identities, Institutions* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2003), 275-91, 284.

²⁴ T. H. Marshall, *Citizenship and Social Class: And Other Essays* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1950), 72.

²⁵ T. H. Marshall, 'Voluntary Action', *The Political Quarterly* 20/1 (1949), 25-35, 27.

educating people in the rights and duties of citizenship. The CAB also acknowledged in its work, the indifference of most people to local and public affairs outside their own private interest. A. A. Garrard, chair of the Central CAB Committee told the Standing Conference of CAB in October 1946 that:

[T]here was a need to arouse the public from their apathy and indifference to the affairs of their locality and he felt that in his field there was a special opportunity for the CAB service to render outstanding help to the community.²⁶

The CAB headquarters held to its central belief in public service to a model of how an ordinary citizen viewed government: 'the average man is interested in the concrete and local application of government, its impact upon himself, his family and his own neighbourhood.'²⁷

The demand for a service such as the CAB was influenced by the conceptions of citizenship that were held by contemporaries. As John Morgan put it:

The service is important, not only because it shows something of the method and the pattern of voluntary service, but also because it has led the way to new official services. One of the problems of government in a complex democratic society is to ensure that the governed know their rights, and know how to obtain them. As legislation and administration become more complicated, so the need for adequate information and advice becomes more apparent.²⁸

²⁶ LMA AC 73/46/7 CAB 51/1 Standing Conference Reports 1942-9, Report of Standing Conference, October 1946.

²⁷ Constance M. King, *Advising the Citizen: A Handbook for Workers in Advice Services Prepared by the Central Committee of the Citizens Advice Bureaux* (London: National Council of Social Service, 1948), 13.

²⁸ John Morgan, 'The National Council of Social Service with Appendix on Work in Rural Areas', in Henry Mess (ed.), *Voluntary Social Services Since 1918* (London: Kegan Paul, 1947), 80-105, 92.

4.3. Structure and resources

As soon as the war was over, the CAB department of the NCSS set about establishing the service as a permanent feature of British society. This was no mean task as the CAB service was far from uniform. Organizationally, it remained a hotchpotch of diverse local and regional arrangements between pre-existing social service organizations, local authorities and voluntary workers. At a National Conference in May 1945 attended by the Minister of Health, H. Willinck MP, representatives from 14 government departments and foreign governments, the Law Society and the British Council of Churches, the Central Committee of the CAB set out its plans for a peace-time service. An important motivating factor in these plans was the belief that the service was 'insufficiently democratic', due to its evolution under wartime conditions.²⁹ The decision was taken to create a National Standing Conference with a constitution. Its membership would consist of one representative from groups of ten registered and approved bureaux, elected by ballot every two years, and members of the Central CAB Committee. Its function would be to arrange meetings at least once a year for the discussion of questions of general interest to the movement and to receive and consider reports and resolutions from the Central Committee.³⁰ The first National Standing Conference was held in October 1946.

There were also a number of important personnel changes following the end of the war. Kathleen Oswald became Head of the CAB department in 1945 and Secretary of the National Committee in 1946, replacing Dorothy Keeling who returned to her work at the Liverpool Personal Service Society. After training at a domestic science college, Oswald had worked at the Sheffield Council of Social Service, and the National Fitness Council before the outbreak of the Second World War. In 1939 she began working for the Ministry of Health as a Regional Welfare Officer.³¹

Perhaps the most difficult and important threat to voluntary organizations like the CAB during the immediate post-war period was financial. Generally, voluntary

²⁹ National Council of Social Service, *Citizens Advice Bureaux after the War: Report of a National Conference, Caxton Hall, Westminster 5-6 May 1945* (London: NCSS, 1945).

³⁰ LMA AC 73/46/8 CAB Committees Minutes and Agendas: 1945-51, Proposed Constitution of National Organization of Citizen Advice Bureaux, undated.

³¹ *The Times*, 12 March 1964.

organizations had not, as some had feared, found that the need for their services had diminished. Yet, while some organizations had been able to maintain their incomes, many experienced serious difficulties. Steeply rising costs, including increased local rates, charges for telephones, gas, and electricity and travelling costs meant that the situation was getting steadily more difficult. To make matters worse, voluntary organizations reported a decline in large personal contributions from which financial support for charities, including charitable trusts, had previously come.

The Ministry of Health had been responsible for grant-aiding the CAB during the war.³² The end of the war threw into question the continued funding of the service by central government. The grant from the Ministry of Health for the funding of the bureaux and for the organization's headquarters was cut. From 1946 there would be no further grant towards the work of individual bureaux. However, the Ministry continued paying for headquarters and regional services until 1949, when the grant was reduced to £5,000. In 1951 the government grant for central CAB headquarter services was finally discontinued. The issue of funding had two parts: the funding for the central services of CAB headquarters, and the funding of local bureaux. The response of civil servants to requests for continued central funding of the service was complex and sometimes contradictory. There was a shared understanding among civil servants that CAB should continue to act as one source of local information, and that the need for them would diminish once local authorities and government departments were able to set up their own information services. Until then the financial responsibility for individual local bureaux should fall on the local authorities concerned. At the same time, there was acceptance of the crucial function of the central CAB Headquarters in maintaining the existence of the service and the importance of central funding to this function.³³ There was some delay in Whitehall's response to the CAB's request for grant aid. A request was made in February 1945, and did not receive a response until the end of June 1945. The decisions on funding the CAB were prolonged by discussions about a potential government organized merger of the NCSS

³² This was a task the Ministry were not happy with. The Ministry of Health felt that the Home Office should have been responsible for grant-aiding the CAB. See TNA HL 102/319.

³³ TNA T/161/1221, Letter from H. Chatterton to A. E. L. Parnis, H.M. Treasury, 29 December 1945.

and the Women's Voluntary Service. The delay was due to the fact that the government lacked a clear policy as to what to do about at the end of the war. The initial reaction of officials in the Treasury was to greatly reduce the grant given the fact that the CAB had been set up to meet war conditions.

The most obvious consequence of the cut in funding for the CAB was the loss of HQ staff. The decision to cancel the grant, according to the Parliamentary Secretary to the renamed Ministry of Local Government and Planning, George Lindgren, speaking in a 1951 Adjournment Debate in the House of Commons, was made because the CAB provided, 'a local government service run locally, and the information is required for local purposes'. It was, therefore, up to the local authority to make a grant to the centre.'³⁴

The reform of local government also impacted on the finances of charities and voluntary organizations, particularly concerning local rates. As a result of the 1948 Local Government Act, many voluntary organizations, including CAB, were required to pay higher rates – in some cases very much higher – than in the past. The main purpose of the Act was to equalize the product of local rating by subsidizing from central government funds those local rating authorities whose product fell below the average. To ensure fairness the valuation of properties was to be conducted by the Inland Revenue rather than the local authorities. Although legally obliged to make a valuation based on the highest obtainable market rent for a building occupied by a charitable organization, local authorities had often made sympathetic assessments based on the likely rent obtainable if the property was let for the purposes for which it was then being used. By transferring valuation to the Inland Revenue, the Department would have no alternative but to apply to charitable and voluntary organizations the normal rules of the law.

The sudden drop of finances had implications for all voluntary organizations, including the CAB. The NCSS was concerned that the decline of resources meant that policy within certain organizations was no longer being pursued because it was right,

³⁴ Hansard, HC (Series 5) Vol. 484, col. 1612 (22 Feb 1951).

but for the reason of finance.³⁵ In 1950 the CAB made a provisional budget for 1951 which showed a £2,500 deficit. The NCSS offered to fill the gap left by the removal of the government grant with its own voluntary funds. The number of CAB travelling officers was cut from 8 to 3 full-time and 1 part-time staff. With the reduction of the links between individual bureaux through the travelling officers, the emphasis and initiative passed to the individual secretaries and organizers of bureaux. This was a development that the Chair of the CAB, R. C. Norman had feared as early as 1945. He was concerned that the removal of travelling officers would lead the organization to atrophy.³⁶

At the same time there was a rapid drop in the number of bureaux. There were 995 bureaux in May 1945 and this reduced to 639 by August 1946. The reasons for the reduction were analyzed by the Central Committee of the CAB. First, the reduction in the number of enquiries leading to the closure of some small bureaux was linked by the Central Committee to a lack of adequate publicity, or a less efficient service, rather than a lack of demand. Second, financial difficulties, due to the lack of support from the local authority or, from voluntary sources or a withdrawal of help in kind or facilities provided free of charge, such as accommodation. Third, was the fall in the number of voluntary workers, especially secretaries due to many women taking up paid work and the lack of energy on the part of the local management committees due to the more demanding conditions of home life now the war was over. One travelling officer suggested that 'in districts where enthusiastic workers have been in charge, the work of the Bureau has continued and developed, but where those that were taking part were convinced it was a war-time service, the enquiries have fallen off since the end of the war.'³⁷

Writing in September 1945, the secretary of the CAB, Dorothy Keeling, commented that many CAB workers were much overstrained and needed a rest; others felt they must now concentrate on the care of their homes which had been neglected in the last few

³⁵ LMA 4016/IS/A/01/032(3) Executive Committee, Minutes, 12 January 1950.

³⁶ LMA AC 73/46/2 CAB/Finance 1944-59, Letter from Mr Norman, Ministry of Health to George Haynes National Council of Social Service, 15 December 1945.

³⁷ LMA AC 73/46/55 Penrith-Pudsey, Region 4 bureaux closed between May 1945 and May 1946.

years. Others were too old to continue the work. Many were only temporary war-time residents in the district and had left the neighbourhood of the Bureau where they had worked. The CAB headquarters wished to avoid a national appeal through the BBC for volunteers, for there was a risk that people 'quite unsuitable' for CAB work might be attracted. Given these difficulties, Keeling set about outlining methods of recruitment on a local and regional basis. Retired local government officers should be targeted, as they were likely to make excellent CAB workers. Public meetings should be held. The Churches should also be approached, as many CAB workers had been drawn from Church members. It was also suggested that requests be made for CAB organizers to speak at meetings of Rotary Clubs and the Inner Wheel, of Local Government Officers arranged through the National Association of Local Government Officers, Soroptimists, Church Workers, Women's Institutes, political groups, and to any other groups of people already interested in some form of work for the community.³⁸ Recruiters for the CAB were also encouraged to approach working-class organizations such as Women's Co-operative Guilds, in an attempt to broaden the representativeness of the workforce.

Some bureaux were reluctant to do their own fundraising. Most bureaux in the South Wales region, it was reported, disliked being asked to raise money, or to be self supporting. According to the travelling officer for the region, Eileen Morgan, the general opinion was that secretaries and helpers gave long hours in a voluntary capacity and they should not be expected to appeal for funds in order to keep themselves employed. In communicating this to headquarters, she argued, 'I fear that this is the outcome of the administration of grant aid. Had the foundations been laid in a different way, then I do not think we should be facing these difficulties now.'³⁹ Individual bureaux were encouraged to turn to local authorities for additional funds to support their work. The results of these appeals were, on the whole, positive. Reports from bureaux to the Standing Conference suggested that large amounts of local authority financial help was being secured by existing bureaux. So much, in fact, that it

³⁸ LMA AC 73/46/8/Meetings/Minutes and Agendas 1945-51, Recruitment of CAB Workers, 2nd Draft, 14 September 1945.

³⁹ LMA AC 73/46/2 Finance 1944-59, Letter from Eileen Morgan to Miss M. Brasnett, 27 Sept 1946.

seemed local authority sources were now providing more help than statutory and local authority grant aid together provided before 1945.⁴⁰ In outer London, for example, where bureaux were organized the London Council of Social Service, 19 local authorities made cash grants in respect of 37 bureaux; 11 gave additional help in kind to 23 bureaux; 9 met the entire cost of 11 bureaux; while only 10 local authorities had refused to grant aid the bureaux in their boroughs or had set up their own information services. An additional 19 local authorities had yet to make up their minds. The Conference reported that the greatest co-operation came from authorities in small towns and rural areas.

An editorial in *The Times* in December 1945 urged local authorities to shoulder the financial responsibility for CAB transferred to them from central government.⁴¹ A wide range of relationships existed between local authorities and local bureaux. Some bureaux were completely independent of statutory help, while others became part of local authority information services, based at the local town hall. Even then, they kept the name of Citizens' Advice Bureau and, where possible, maintained contact with the national service through membership of county and regional committees. For example, Guildford CAB's secretary was an official of the local authority. Norwich CAB was run under the tutelage of the Public Assistance Department (or National Assistance as it became in 1948). In a significant number of cases, the bureau operated in public libraries, often using library staff. In some cases, where the local authority paid officials to run them, the efficiency was higher than in bureaux run by voluntary agencies.

In addition to local authority funding, the CAB was forced to turn to more commercial means of raising funds. In 1948 the Central Committee decided to levy a charge on bureaux wishing to be affiliated with the national service. This was set at £5 per annum, though in practice, any amounts were accepted. In exchange, bureaux could continue accessing the central information service, and would receive copies of Citizen's Advice Notes – digests of new legislation and regulations). Collecting these

⁴⁰ LMA AC 73/46/7 Meetings 1947-59, Abridged Report of First Standing Conference, 18-19 Oct 1946.

⁴¹ *The Times*, 18 December 1945, 5.

fees proved difficult – in 1949 only about two thirds of the predicted amounts were collected.⁴²

Despite the help from local authorities, costs rose due to the greater employment of paid staff by bureaux in urban areas. The increase in paid officials was not a response to a decline in the number of volunteers; rather it was due to the need to open many bureaux for longer hours as they were now linked to local authorities. It was hard to maintain longer opening hours through voluntary labour alone.

Attempts were made to rationalize the organization and operations of the CAB as a voluntary service. This echoed the NCSS's wider project of rationalizing the relationship between the state and voluntary organizations in a corporatist framework. Broadly, there were continuing parallels in developments in civil society and the state towards centralization and rationalization. The Chair of the CAB Central Committee, Mr. A. A. Garrard, told the Standing Conference in 1946 that there were too many voluntary organizations in the field of social service, and that, just as there was an attempt in local government to rationalize, so too should voluntary organizations attempt to simplify and coordinate their efforts.⁴³ CAB headquarters, along with other voluntary organizations of this period, continued to view their role as one of partnership with the statutory services.

The need for training was repeatedly stressed in circulars and notices to organizers of individual bureaux. In London, the newly renamed Family Welfare Association, formerly the Charity Organization Society, ran training lectures specifically for bureaux staff. It was not clear how much impact training had on workers outside London and other urban areas. Evelyn Pember, organizer of the Mitcham bureau, complained in 1946 that 'so many CAB workers are allowed to drift along without any kind of standard being set to them.'⁴⁴

⁴² LMA AC 73/46/2 Finance 1944-59/Affiliation of Bureaux, Letter from Miss K. M. Oswald to D. H. Hall, 5 October 1949.

⁴³ LMA AC 73/46/8 Meetings, 1940-59, Abridged Report of First Standing Conference, 18-19 Oct 1946.

⁴⁴ LMA AC 73/46/ 24 Region 5 K-M/Mitcham, Letter from E. Pember to K. M. Oswald, 6 April 1946.

As part of their adaptation to changing circumstances, the Central Committee of the CAB published a training handbook in 1948, 'Advising the Citizen', copies of which were sold in large numbers to local authorities as a basis for training their own workers. Day and residential courses were organized throughout the country, dealing with new social legislation. The response to these was largely positive, with local authorities even sending their own staff on such courses. Additionally, in 1947 the Standing Conference of CAB set up a registration scheme to monitor the standards of individual bureaux. Bureaux which met certain quality criteria were granted registration, while those that did not were designated as 'associated'.

The picture presented by the CAB organization across the country was complex, and divisions between London and the rest of the country were apparent throughout this period. There was a continuing divide between bureaux in rural and urban areas, with more educated staff tending to work in bureaux situated in cities. In rural areas, the national committee hoped to seek out leaders already respected and well known in the community: the village nurse, vicar, schoolmasters, parish councillors, Red Cross representatives. The strength of individual bureau, as was true with many voluntary organizations, still depended on the presence of individuals with strong commitments to the bureau. The national committee stressed the importance of a strong local committee to prevent the closure of bureaux when individuals left or moved away, but, with so few central staff, this was almost impossible to police.

The late 1940s were a time of anxiety for the middle classes due high taxation and rationing and constricted living standards. The political expression of that anxiety was neatly encapsulated in Roy Lewis and Angus Maude's 1949 political tract: *The Middle Classes: A Critical survey of the history, present condition and prospects of the middle classes, from whom come most of the nation's brains, leadership and organizing ability*.⁴⁵ Of great concern, according to the authors, was the increase in taxation and cost of living, and also the loss of leisure. The authors set out to describe the loss of status of the middle classes compared with manual workers and 'routine brain workers', meaning clerks and administrators.

⁴⁵ Roy Lewis and Angus Maude, *The English Middle Classes* (London: Phoenix House, 1949).

An important claim for the continued importance of the middle classes in British post-war society was their role in the provision of voluntary social services. Lewis and Maude quoted the case of the CAB. In 1948, George Isaacs, Minister of Labour, stated that the Resettlement Advice Offices set up by the government were dealing with 15,000 queries a week, at a cost of £190,000 a year. In contrast, the CAB was dealing with 30,000 queries a week at a fraction of the cost.⁴⁶ Lewis and Maude also mentioned that: 'It may even seem obvious that as Government increases its hold upon every aspect of the citizen's existence, as the state becomes more nearly omnipotent, voluntary effort will be the more necessary to soften the impact of decisions and orders based on statistical returns rather than on the thoughts of living men and women...'⁴⁷ Finally, Lewis and Maude argued that it had become harder for middle class individuals to remain independent of the state: 'At the same time, as the springs of middle-class bounty are dried up by taxation and higher living costs, the enthusiasts who devote their lives to causes and institutions will be more and more frequently compelled to seek financial aid (and with it a measure of supervision) from the state.'⁴⁸

This sense of anxiety was evidence among the leaders of the CAB. Concerns over post-war resettlement reflected their sense of social insecurity. As the Secretary for the Central Committee noted, how would men who have had all their thinking done for them adjust to the community when they returned to live their own lives? How would men who had learned for the first time the art of leadership react when they return to a dull desk job or dull manual work?⁴⁹ One of the main organisational difficulties in the post-war period would, it was assumed, be providing adequate leadership in communities.⁵⁰

⁴⁶ Ibid., 223.

⁴⁷ Ibid., 225.

⁴⁸ Ibid., 227-8.

⁴⁹ LMA AC 73/46/10 CAB Future 1943-4, The immediate future of the CAB movement, by Miss D C Keeling.

⁵⁰ LMA AC 73/46/10 CAB Future 1943-4, The Future of Citizens' Advice Bureaux', memo sent out to all regional officers, with covering note dated 5 March 1943, 1.

4.4. External Relations

The immediate post-war political environment was not as hostile to voluntary organizations as has often been assumed. Certainly the trade union movement was determined to eliminate friendly societies from the 'public' voluntary sector in national insurance during the post-war era. That said, the newly elected Labour government was not as bureaucratic and state-orientated as their critics have claimed. Voluntary organizations such as the CAB received verbal encouragement from the state and contemporaries continued to stress the importance of the CAB in the post-war context. William Beveridge, for example, devoted considerable space to the CAB in the third of his trilogy of reports, *Voluntary Action*, in 1948. Their work was crucial, he argued, in explaining the workings of public authority, protecting the citizen, and providing friendship.⁵¹ Beveridge also stressed the continued importance of the independence and impartiality of the CAB service. 'Advice to citizens', he argued, 'must be given independently by other citizens. A public authority may provide the material means for Citizens' Advice Bureaux but it should no more control them than it controls universities.'⁵²

Beveridge's *Voluntary Action* report received a very lukewarm public reception on its publication, and its vision of voluntarism and unpaid public service was very similar to that of the CAB.⁵³ For Beveridge, voluntary action was a means by which individuals could participate in the wider public activities of the state. Jose Harris has argued that *Voluntary Action* came out a moment 'when the wider culture appeared to be relatively hostile to voluntarism.'⁵⁴ Harris argues that this hostility was brought about by the decisive turning-point in cultural, class and gender relations caused by the levelling impact of the war itself. However, despite the unpopularity of older forms of voluntarism, it is clear that the war brought to the fore many new forms of voluntary action, such as the CAB. This suggests that the CAB movement owed much to the

⁵¹ William Beveridge, *Voluntary Action: A Report on Methods of Social Advance* (London: George Allen & Unwin Ltd., 1948), 284.

⁵² *Ibid.* 287.

⁵³ Jose Harris, 'Voluntarism, the state and public-private partnerships in Beveridge's social thought', in Melanie Oppenheimer and Nicholas Deakin, eds., *Beveridge and Voluntary Action in Britain and the Wider British World* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2010) pp.9-20.

⁵⁴ *Ibid.* p.16

vision of a small band of enthusiasts who continued to argue for the importance of this new kind of voluntary action over older forms of voluntarism. These new volunteer movements were, Harris argues, largely female, and their primary aim was to give practical help rather than to promote thrift and saving. Finally, these new movements (the CAB included) reflected a class structure and outlook that were markedly different from those of voluntary movements earlier in the century. The war had brought into voluntary services several millions of working-class and lower-middle-class women, alongside a smaller but still significant number of women from the aristocratic and upper middle classes.

A potential conflict between the CAB and the state began to develop towards the end of 1943 when the Ministry of Labour began formulating plans for Resettlement Advice Offices. These would, it was anticipated, deal with the questions of ex-servicemen and women, and those demobilised from war work. In an undated memo, the Ministry of Labour argued that the problems of resettlement would be diverse for two reasons. First was the length of the war. Second was the social upheaval due to evacuation, air raid damage, conscription, industrial transfer, reorganizations of industry and other factors. 'Government regulations and controls,' the memo went on, 'have impinged upon the lives of ordinary people in many ways and these may continue, change or cease in the post-armistice period.'⁵⁵ The plan was that such offices would give advice and information to those in need of resettlement from the armed forces and war work. Other people, it was argued, should be referred to the CAB. Officials in the Ministry of Labour argued that it was reasonable to assume that a considerable number of people would require social casework after the war. 'In some ways', officials argued, 'the work would be analogous to that done at present by the Citizens' Advice Bureaux. But although the Citizens' Advice Bureaux might very well continue in some form after the war, it is not considered that they could meet or be adapted to meet the special requirements of the demobilisation and resettlement period.'⁵⁶ Voluntary organizations, it was argued, were not established in every place and their branches

⁵⁵ TNA LAB 32/13, Resettlement Advice Service, memo, undated, unauthored.

⁵⁶ TNA LAB 32/13, Proposal by Lord President's Committee to establish Resettlement and Welfare Bureaux, memo by Minister of Labour and National Service, 13 September 1943.

varied greatly in efficiency.⁵⁷ This said, H. N. de Villiers argued in June 1944: 'No one I imagine would want to kill the voluntary work of the Citizens Advice Bureaux by an attempt to extend the scope of the Resettlement Advice Offices beyond the resettlement cases. In any case such an attempt would I think rouse a lot of hostility against our new Service...'.⁵⁸

Yet, not all civil servants shared the view that there should be a clear division in responsibilities between the state and the CAB in the provision of information services. Following a deputation from the NCSS and the CAB in December 1945, A. N. Rucker, a senior civil servant in the Ministry of Housing and Local Government wrote: 'Some local authorities will want to run their own information centres, making use of the CAB to deal with the more personal type of enquiry. Others will want to hand the whole job over to the CAB. The actual arrangements will probably vary widely from one authority to another. All this is, I think, quite as it should be. We can be quite content to see a number of experiments made and let the type or types of information centre which will be most useful in peacetime emerge.' Some civil servants, therefore, held a flexible and organic attitude towards voluntary organizations such as the CAB.

Nevertheless, government interest in post-war publicity gained speed after the general election. In August 1945, the Ministry of Information was directed to prepare for Cabinet a memorandum on the post-war organization of government publicity. The first meeting of the Cabinet Committee on the post-war organization of government

⁵⁷ TNA LAB 32/13, Resettlement Advice Service, Minute by Miss Batten to Mr Neden, 20 April 1944.

⁵⁸ TNA LAB 32/13, Minute, by H. N. de Villiers, to D.G. M.P. 1 June 1944. The Resettlement Advice Offices was discontinued in 30 June 1949, by which time 371 offices had dealt with 3,000,000 enquiries about employment, further education and training, vocational training, and general questions about resettlement in civil life, many of a personal nature. In June 1945, Treasury officials came to the conclusion, given that the Ministry of Labour scheme would not be in full operation, the local authority Service would take some time to set up, and that there would be a considerable volume of enquiries to be dealt with by the Bureaux arising out of demobilisation, that the CAB should continue with government assistance during the financial year, see TNA T/161/1221, Letter from H. R. Liddle to Pyke-Lees, 9 June 1945.

publicity was held in September 1945.⁵⁹ Herbert Morrison, in particular, was interested and aware of the importance of information and publicity. Concerning specific information about the new social services planned by the Labour government, it was assumed that individuals would approach the state for advice. The new National Assistance Board, formed in 1948, assumed that people receiving National Assistance would 'naturally' turn to the Board's Officers for advice, while people not receiving assistance from the Board would probably turn to the local officers of the Ministry of National Insurance for information about social security. Behind this assumption lay the promises by the new Minister of National Insurance, James Griffiths, that new local offices would be friendly, warm, new and comfortable. However, as he told the assembled CAB in 1949, due to shortages of building material, only 10 of 1,000 offices were actually new buildings.

Alongside support for the CAB, there were broader debates about the proper role of voluntary organizations vis-à-vis the state. During the immediate post-war years, a number of people continued attempting to define the nature of the relationship between voluntary organizations, like the CAB, and the state more precisely. Henry Mess, who had been director of Tyneside Council of Social Service, and later a Reader in Sociology at the University of London, had planned a volume before his death, attempting to set out clear lines of demarcation between voluntary and statutory services.⁶⁰ The volume was finished and published by colleagues after his death. Due to the piecemeal growth of statutory services in areas where voluntary organizations had previously experimented, Mess argued, there was no logical division between voluntary agencies and the statutory agencies.⁶¹ In the introduction, the sociologist Gertrude Williams acknowledged that the problems thrown up by the war were a challenge to voluntary effort as much as to statutory provision. Not only had existing

⁵⁹ Mariel Grant, 'Towards a Central Office of Information: Continuity and Change in British Government Information Policy, 1939-51', *Journal of Contemporary History* 34/1 (1999) 49-67, 57.

⁶⁰ Anne Pimlott Baker, 'Mess, Henry Adolphus (1884-1944)', *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, Oxford University Press, 2004 [<http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/69000>, accessed 9 July 2012].

⁶¹ Henry A. Mess, 'The Place of Voluntary Social Service in the Life of the Nation', in Henry A. Mess, (ed.), *Voluntary services since 1919* (London: Kegan Paul, 1947), 204-13, 205.

social agencies undergone considerable changes in their response to social problems, but completely new organizations had to be established to deal with unprecedented situations.⁶²

The ideas of Hilda Jennings, the social worker and CAB organizer, based in the University Settlement in Bristol, had been forged from her pre-war experience serving on a voluntary child care committee in London. As Jennings argued, the war years had widened the partnership between public and voluntary social services, and highlighted individual differences and the need for individual study and treatment of the disadvantaged. The war had also given practical recognition to the principle of co-operation, not only in the voluntary sphere, but over the whole field shared by public and voluntary services.⁶³ Voluntary organizations, she argued, would bring flexibility to society, a quality that would allow them to point the way for the state to follow in social services. She recognised the limited capacity of the state to embody the common good:

Both social relations and the conception of the social functions of groups and institutions change. The society, which on the functional basis only, at one time approaches integration, is liable either to become fossilised or to fall apart. The state can only embody the desires of contemporary society. The voluntary association is not thus cabined and confined. Its proper task is always to give expression to the questioning spirit of mankind.⁶⁴

These debates were not ignored by the Labour government, who envisaged a continuing role for voluntary organizations. In a June 1949 debate in the House of Lords on 'voluntary action for social progress', Francis (Frank) Pakenham, a philanthropist and Labour peer, spoke on behalf of the government.⁶⁵ He repudiated

⁶² Gertrude Williams, 'The Training and Recruitment of Social Workers', in Henry A. Mess, (ed.), *Voluntary services since 1919* (London: Kegan Paul, 1947), 214-46.

⁶³ Hilda Jennings, 'Voluntary Case-work Societies', in Henry A. Mess, (ed.), *Voluntary services since 1919* (London: Kegan Paul, 1947), 55-68.

⁶⁴ *Ibid.*, 68.

⁶⁵ Pakenham, Francis Aungier [Frank], first Baron Pakenham and seventh earl of Longford (1905–2001), politician, writer, and philanthropist. Pakenham's war work took the form of acting as key assistant to Sir William Beveridge, in preparing plans for co-ordinating the post-war social services. See Paul Johnson, 'Pakenham, Francis

the notion that Labour believed only in the provision of welfare through the state and praised the CAB for its work in cooperation with local authorities.⁶⁶ He also explained that grants in aid of the work of voluntary organizations would be given by government departments for work in which they were particularly interested. He also warned that government departments would look at the ability of voluntary organizations to raise money from other sources for proof of their vitality. Government departments concerned with the administration of grants to voluntary organizations would encourage them to maintain the flow of voluntary resources in addition to any grant aid.

Labour's approach to voluntary organizations and the CAB was influenced by its conception of citizenship. Labour's attitude to citizenship, Abigail Beach has highlighted, was complex. Labour, she argues, defended voluntary effort in an abstract way, and its policy towards voluntary organizations up to 1951 was multi-faceted and evolving.⁶⁷ The CAB was thought by some Labour politicians to be one means by which it would be possible to maintain democracy in a planned society. The need to stimulate voluntary action received renewed attention on the left as a result of the changes in the relationship of the citizen to the state. As Jose Harris argues, the post-war welfare reforms of 1945-8 entailed a massive transfer of administrative powers away from voluntary and local government organizations towards centralized departments in Whitehall.⁶⁸ Within these debates, the role of experts, civil servants, charities and their relations with the individual were considered in the context of an overriding desire to maintain and promote democracy. Francis William, the new advisor on public relations to the Labour Prime Minister, told the delegates of the 1946

Aungier [Frank], first Baron Pakenham and seventh earl of Longford (1905–2001)', *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, Oxford University Press, Jan 2005; online edn, Jan 2011 [<http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/76133>, accessed 9 July 2012].

⁶⁶ Hansard, HL (Series 5) Vol. 466, col. 119 (22 June 1949).

⁶⁷ Abigail L. Beach, 'The Labour Party and the Idea of Citizenship, c.1931-1951', unpublished PhD thesis (University College London, University of London, 1996). See also Nicholas Deakin and Justin Davis Smith, 'Labour, charity and voluntary action: the myth of hostility', in Matthew Hilton and James McKay ed. *The Ages of Voluntarism: How we got to the Big Society* (London: Oxford University Press, 2011), 69-93.

⁶⁸ José Harris, 'Tradition and Transformation: Society and Civil Society in Britain, 1945-2001' in Kathleen Burk (ed.), *The British Isles Since 1945* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2006), 91-126, 99-100.

Standing Conference of CAB that the great problem of the age was how to reconcile a greater degree of economic and social planning with that essential of democracy, the widest measure of individual freedom and individual responsibility. He went on to praise the CAB suggesting:

There could be no greater threat to the successful development of democracy than a feeling by the ordinary citizen of being baffled and puzzled and of now knowing the meaning and the personal application of legislation passed centrally or of Acts and administration carried out locally.⁶⁹

Following the debate in the House of Lords in 1949, Herbert Morrison, Lord President, commented that it, and subsequent press comment, had 'shown the strength of the interest in this subject and of the feeling – which I share – that our voluntary organizations are a great national asset which it would be a serious mistake to neglect or ignore.'⁷⁰ Morrison's response was to seek to reform the legal and regulatory framework surrounding charities and charitable trusts. In January 1950, a Committee on the Law and Practice relating to Charitable Trusts was appointed to 'consider the part "charity" should, or can, play in the modern social structure.'⁷¹ A lawyer, Lord Nathan was appointed as the chair.⁷²

Around the same time, there was an attempt within Whitehall, by civil servants, to clearly define the financial relationship with the state voluntary organizations could expect. Civil servants, like the Labour government, were nervous of making voluntary organizations overly reliant on state financial support. An official from the Treasury wrote to the Ministry of Housing and Local Government in 1949, stating that the Treasury were now prepared to consider authorising grants to voluntary organizations where they performed specific work on behalf of government departments or work

⁶⁹ LMA AC 73/46/7 CAB 51/1 Standing Conference Reports 1942-9, Report of Standing Conference, October 1946.

⁷⁰ TNA PREM 8/1016, Lord President's Committee, memo by the Lord President of the Council, 12 July 1949.

⁷¹ *Report of the Committee on the Law and Practice relating to Charitable Trusts* (1952: Cmd. 8710).

⁷² A. L. Goodhart, 'Nathan, Harry Louis, first Baron Nathan (1889–1963)', rev. Oxford Dictionary of National Biography, Oxford University Press, 2004; online edn, Jan 2008 [<http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/35188>, accessed 9 July 2012].

that it was essential to encourage. He argued that more pressure should be placed on voluntary organizations to secure funding from voluntary sources. Finally, if possible, departments should have some say in the policy of voluntary organizations to which they gave grants.⁷³

Turning from voluntary organizations in general to the CAB in particular, the grant from the Ministry of Housing and Local Government to the CAB headquarters did not meet the conditions outlined above by the Treasury for the granting of aid. Although it provided a useful service to the community, the department did not feel responsible for the workings of the organization's headquarters. When it came to decide whether to continue the CAB grant to the NCSS, the Ministry argued that the grant:

[it] will be used to keep in being an organization providing a service of which only some local authorities wish to avail themselves, while other local authorities, and, by that token, the more progressive ones, are content to provide their own service. Yet these other authorities or their ratepayers while wholly responsible for the cost of their service will as taxpayers contribute to the cost of the other authorities' services.⁷⁴

At a national level, the CAB maintained its wartime links with the BBC. Douglas Houghton was one such contact, and CAB continued to assist the BBC with its information and advice series, 'Can I Help You?'⁷⁵ The CAB also secured favourable national press coverage. In November 1949, a special correspondent on *The Times*, wrote an article under the heading 'A wartime service that meets a peace-time need.'⁷⁶ The article outlined the pattern of bureaux operating throughout the country and the importance of local characteristics in ensuring that the CAB became a vital factor in the life of the community. As regards liaison with Government Departments, the CAB Central Committee believed that they had good cause to be pleased with the progress made in effecting and maintaining good relations with government. They felt convinced that there was a growing recognition at policy level of the permanent place

⁷³ TNA HL 102/319, Voluntary associations, government policy on grants by W.S.W, 5 October 1949.

⁷⁴ TNA HLG 102/320, unauthored memo to Mr. Armer, undated.

⁷⁵ The Can I Help you was a wartime radio service offering legal advice.

⁷⁶ *The Times*, 14 November, 1949, 5.

of the CAB voluntary movement as an indispensable adjunct to central and local government.

Attitudes of local authorities to bureaux remained diverse, as suggested by the financial contributions they made. One civil servant noted, in the case of Brighton, that the CAB:

[...] created a niche for themselves in the public esteem by sympathetic and discreet handling of cases [...] I understand that in other areas in the region outside London where the local authorities did not establish Information Centres during the war, voluntary organizations similar to those in Brighton and Hove are not only continuing but are extending the scope of their work.⁷⁷

A consultative committee was established in 1946 to advise the Ministry of Health and local authorities' associations on general questions of local government publicity. An interim report was published in November 1947 and in December 1948 a survey was conducted of all local authorities. Of those surveyed, around half (700 local authorities) replied. Of these only 163 maintained their own information centres, or gave substantial aid to voluntary ones, meaning the CAB. Only 41 local authorities had appointed specialized public relations officers.⁷⁸

The social work profession grew more rapidly after 1945, the war acting as a stimulus to training and the acquisition of theoretical and practical knowledge. Yet, still, the great majority of social workers at this point were volunteers, including some middle class housewives and some lower middle class women contributing in their spare time. The influx of young social work trainees was reflected in the social relations within some of the bureaux. Social workers, it was assumed would continue to work in partnership with volunteers. As the Northumberland and Tyneside Council of Social Service wrote to secretaries of bureaux in the local area in 1946:

A volunteer has here a most significant part to play permanently in peacetime. The general enquiries of the public are too numerous to be dealt with by one

⁷⁷ TNA AST 7/789 Letter from Miss Cochrane to Miss M. E. Nanson, 21 June 1946.

⁷⁸ Ministry of Health, *Publicity for Local Government, Ministry of Health Final Report* (London: HMSO, 1950).

caseworker for each town, while the caseworker should be freed in order to devote her time in the more complicated cases. This should prove a most fruitful partnership between the trained and voluntary adviser and the full time caseworker.⁷⁹

⁷⁹ LMA AC 73/46/71 CAB Region 1 Finance and General Correspondence, Newcastle & Tyne Council of Social Service, Letters to Secretaries of Citizens Advice Bureaux, 9 July 1946.

4.5. Outcomes

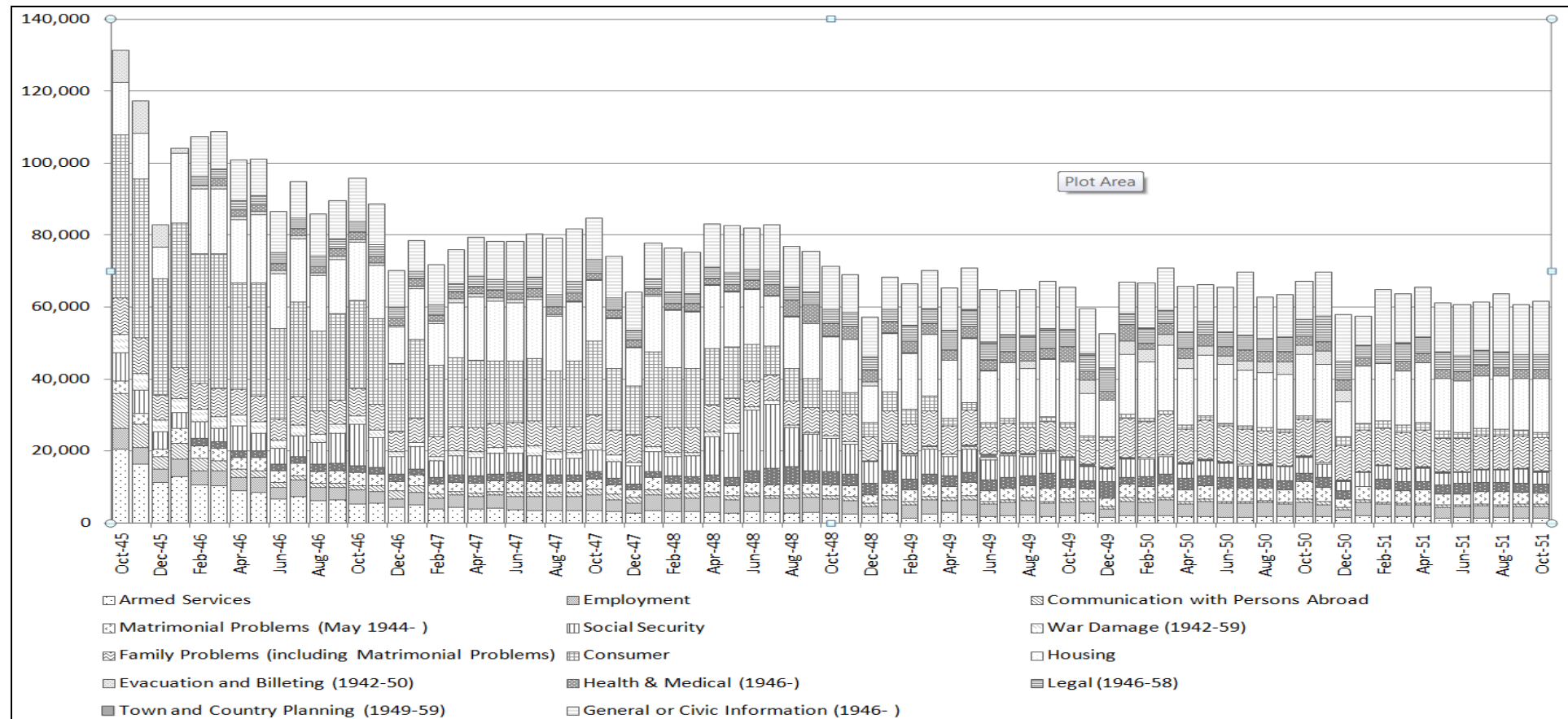
The continuing need for the bureaux' services was evident in the increasing numbers of problems that were brought to it. The demand was due to several factors, one of which was the failure of the state to provide comprehensive information services of its own. The Resettlement Advice Offices were not created in sufficient numbers to meet demand. As Margaret Brasnett pointed out, in one Scottish city, one office was planned where there had been nine bureaux.⁸⁰ People turned to the CAB with their problems in hundreds and thousands. Although there was a slight decrease in enquiries, down to 120,000 per month by 1946 from 154,000 in early 1945, these cases were more complex than previously. The largest decreases concerned service questions and war damage (except in London). Questions about travel, emigration, naturalisation, repatriation became more important. Enquiries about supplies and rationing, including clothing, food and utility furniture, continued to form the largest single category of inquiry; housing problems came next.⁸¹ From this initial dip the monthly number of enquiries began to climb to 125,000 in 1947 and 140,000 in 1948. In 1950, just as funding was being cut by central government, bureaux began to receive enquiries from reservists about the implications of being called up to fight in Korea.⁸² As can be seen from Figure 2, the number of enquiries relating to the social services rose in 1948 as the National Health Service, and National Insurance Acts came into effect. Consumer and army problems continued to dominate although these decreased as time progressed.

⁸⁰ Margaret Brasnett, *The Story of the Citizens' Advice Bureaux* (London: National Council of Social Service, 1964) 23.

⁸¹ LMA AC 73/46/8 Meetings 1945-51, Progress Report, July 1946, 10.

⁸² LMA AC 73/46/2 CAB/Finance Grants Min Health, Letter from Miss K. M. Oswald to Mr. A. A. Garrard, 15 August 1950.

Figure 2 Number and proportion of enquiries, September 1945-October 1951¹



¹ LMA AC 73/46/66; 67; 68; 69; 70; Statistical Abstracts, 1942-59.

Shortages of housing, food and other materials continued after the end of the war. There was also the related issue of the psychological readjustment of recently demobilised soldiers.¹ Anxious wives often approached bureaux concerning their husband's homecoming. CAB enquiries in these years reflected the continued re-adjustment to peacetime conditions, including helping people to move from their current work or from the armed forces. Other enquiries were of an emotional and personal nature, often related to marriages. Marriage was thought to be under threat in this period. The seriousness of the issue can be seen in the establishment of the National Marriage Guidance Council and its part-funding by the government.

Housing was one topic that attracted a large proportion of enquiries. By the autumn of 1945, significant numbers of people were looking for somewhere to live. The CAB provided useful evidence to a government committee on Rent Control - the Ridley Committee - which reported in 1945 in favour of setting up special tribunals to prevent profiteering in the expected post-war housing shortage. The report led to the Furnished Houses (Rent Control) Act of 1946. The main work of the tribunals was to hear applications by tenants for the reduction of rent and granting security of tenure. Soldiers returned to find their homes destroyed and in some cases had to live with their families in cramped accommodation. Newly fashionable psychologists attempted to assess the effects of bad housing on family life.²

Another example of the CAB acting as a gauge of the effect on individual people of new legislation and of the social services generally concerned the Town and Country Planning Act 1947, particularly the provisions relating to developments and claims for compensation. Evidence collected by bureaux and sent to the central headquarters suggested that there was a good deal of confusion in the minds of the public as to the meaning of parts of the Act. As George Haynes, General Secretary of the NCSS put it:

They affect large sections of the population and the experience of the Bureaux goes to show that people are unaware of the ways in which they will be affected by

¹ Alan Allport, *Demobbed: Coming Home after the Second World War* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 2009).

² Agatha H. Bowley, *The Problems of Family Life: An Environmental Study* (Edinburgh: E. & S. Livingstone, 1946).

them. There is a need for greater publicity for these parts of the Act and, in the opinion of some of the Bureaux, there may be need to revive the Poor Man's Valuer Service or to establish some similar machinery whereby people with limited means can be advised as to their position and the steps they should taken in securing their rights under the Act.³

In addition some of the new welfare measures introduced between 1944 and 1948 confused the ordinary citizen. In 1946, a small bureau in East Anglia reported 97 enquiries in one month about Family Allowances. One outer London bureau dealt with 600 such enquiries in April 1946.⁴ The Family Allowances Act, 1945; the National Insurance Act, 1946; the National Insurance (Industrial Injuries) Act, 1946; the Education Act, 1944; the Disabled Persons (Employment) Act, 1944; the National Health Service Act, 1946; the National Assistance Act, 1948; the Children Act, 1948 - although designed to take care of the basic needs of every citizen were intricate and their relations with one another confusing. Social insurance questions, (e.g. concerning national insurance, the financial aspects of industrial injury and enquiries about national assistance) accounted for about 90,000 of the approximately 855,000 queries in the first half of 1948. Enquiries regarding health and medical problems totalled 25,000.⁵

An extract from a daybook of a Citizens Advice Bureau in the London area during April 1947 paints an interesting picture of people's problems. Of the thirty-three enquires on a single day, twenty-seven were from women. The enquiries varied in scope, including concerning lost or burnt clothing, conditions for statutory benefits, delays in payment of benefits, threats of eviction, poor quality of war damage repairs, relationship difficulties and unhappy or difficult living arrangements. The advice given by bureau workers ranged from writing covering letters for people, giving out forms, explaining legislation and benefit conditions, and offering referral and advice on where to go to have an enquiry answered. In some cases it was assumed by bureau workers that confusion or ignorance were the main contributing factor in people's problems with the welfare state. In March 1949, Minister for National Insurance, James

³ LMA AC 73/46/2 CAB/Finance Grants Min Health, Letter for grant application 1949/50.

⁴ LMA AC 73/46/8 Meetings 1945-51, Progress Report, July 1946, 10.

⁵ LMA AC 73/46/7CAB 51/2 Reports of Conferences 1947-59, Report of the Central Committee of the Citizens Advice Bureaux, 1948.

Griffiths, told assembled CAB delegates, that in the previous week, a third of all applications for benefits had failed to quote their National Insurance number. An important outcome of CAB work was the empowerment of citizens confused by the changes of the welfare state.

Another important factor in people's decisions to use the bureaux was their continuing dislike of bureaucracy. This was not new. Working-class groups, according to the Nuffield wartime social survey of the social services, had shown a strong dislike of form-filling and the intrusiveness of state bureaucracy.⁶ The middle classes disliked the loss of the personal relationship between giver and receiver of state benefits and its potentially corrosive effect on the democratic relationships of individuals to the state. The CAB were beneficiaries of the general distrust of bureaucracy. For example, Robert G. Tarran of Tarran & Sons building and civil engineer contractors, contributed to the funds of the central CAB headquarters in November 1950, 'because of the lack of ability of those in all offices of political and official life in the country who govern today, with particular emphasis on the insipid technical bureaucracy that is growing unknown within our midst as it were, and has become the master of the Politician, the People and the Press.'⁷ Ambivalence towards bureaucracy remained an important aspect of public opinion during the immediate post-war years. Margaret Brasnett commented on the resettlement offices:

Most people [...] were tired and wary of government offices and regulations and restrictions; and, however friendly and informal, as well as efficient the resettlement advice officers might be (and those were the qualities which the Ministry had intended them all to show), many enquirers would prefer to take their questions in the first place to an unofficial bureau, or even in the second place in order to check the exact meaning or impartiality of what 'They' had said.⁸

⁶ José Harris, 'Did British workers want the welfare state? GDH Cole's survey of 1942', in Jay Winter (ed.), *The Working Class in Modern British History: Essays in Honour of Henry Pelling* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1983), 200-14.

⁷ LMA AC/73/46/2 CAB/Fin3, Letter from D. Tarran to D. H. Hall, 2 November 1950.

⁸ Margaret Brasnett, *The Story of the Citizens' Advice Bureaux* (London: National Council of Social Service, 1964), 23.

Again, the problems dealt with reflected the desires of the CAB, and of women's organizations of the period, to rebuild traditional family life after the upheaval of war, and to support women in their role as housewives and mothers.⁹ A typical concern, as we have seen, was to continue to promote the concept of responsible and active citizenship for women and to inform women about the implications for them of new legislation. For example, a married woman going out to work did not realise that choosing not to pay national insurance on her own account and to depend on her husband's insurance record for her pension in old age meant that she would save money in the short run, but would have to wait for a pension till she was 65, instead of 60, if her husband was the same age as herself and longer if he were younger and get a lower pension. Another issue concerned the discontent that married women living apart from their husbands paying full insurance contributions were only entitled to 16s sickness benefit or 20s unemployment benefit and a lower pension unless they could prove that they were not being maintained by their husband. The CAB argued:

The general view appears to be that there is no justification for this distinction between the benefits due to married and single women for the same contributions and that the present regulation bears heavily on the woman living apart from her husband maintaining herself by her own efforts and ready and anxious to insure herself against sickness or unemployment. In addition to the fact that the contribution is the same, such a married woman is not exercising her right to rely on her husband's insurance.¹⁰

⁹ Catriona Beaumont, 'Housewives, Workers and Citizen: Voluntary Women's Organizations and the Campaign for Women's Rights in England and Wales during the Post-War Period', in Nick Crowson, Matthew Hilton, and James McKay (eds.) *NGOs in Contemporary Britain: Non-state Actors in Society and Politics Since 1945* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2009) 59-76.

¹⁰ LMA AC 73/46/8 CAB Committee Minutes and Agendas 1945-51, Report on inquiry concerning National Insurance Regulations, 30 March 1951.

4.6. Conclusion

Margaret Simey, the social and political campaigner, writing in 1951, suggested that 'the voluntary society and the voluntary worker feel that they are being constantly forced to shift their ground, though often unable to decide where to shift to, or indeed to give up altogether. Their present is precarious, their future obscure.'¹¹

To what extent this is true for all voluntary organizations is questionable. The CAB felt confident in its distinctive role as a source of information and advice that was separate and independent from the state. The CAB defined its role in the post-war period and argued its corner in debates over the provision of information services. More broadly, at the same time as voluntary organizations were supposed to be in jeopardy, they were being pressed by the state and the public to expand their services as perceived social problems multiplied. The NCSS expected a rise in demand in the field of voluntary work and were confident of the future role of voluntary organizations, in the post-war state.¹² Considerations of public finance had limited the state's action in the information field, and voluntary organizations including the CAB, assumed this would continue. Furthermore, information and advice on the statutory services could not, for ideological reasons, be supplied by the state.

But what weight should be given to views in Whitehall on the decision whether to encourage voluntary organizations? Abigail Beach has argued that it was the Treasury that acted as the main brake on the wider examination of the financing of voluntary bodies. Because Labour's response to the role of voluntary action was dependent on the nature of the different voluntary organizations, often serving different needs, this affected the Treasury's stance. The nature of the legal relationship between voluntary agencies and the state was left ambiguous as more pressing issues concerned the Labour government. The undefined nature of the relationship might, she posits, have acted as a brake on further investigation and reform. More generally, studies of the

¹¹ Margaret B. Simey, *Charitable Effort in Liverpool in the Nineteenth Century* (Liverpool: Liverpool University Press, 1951), 3.

¹² *The Times*, Letter from DHW Wall, Hon Treasurer of National Council of Social Service, 29 October 1948.

post-war civil service has been critical of the failure to reform the machinery of government to match its' new responsibilities for economic and social management.¹³

The NCSS showed a great deal of awareness of the need for a new role and demonstrated its frustration with the Labour governments of 1945-51 for failing to spell out exactly what form the new relationship between statutory and voluntary social services should take. The result was often frustration and inaction; behind all the discussions between voluntary organizations and the state was the assumption that the failure to adapt to the new circumstances of post-war Britain would result in their death or decline. It was apparent, however, that a space had been left for voluntary organization in the modern welfare state, and that it was the job of the discerning volunteer to discover how best that space might be filled. Consequently, voluntary organizations in the 1940s and 50s would have ample opportunity to justify their existence.

The assumption of the Liverpool Council of Social Service was that voluntary organizations would continue to push for social progress. It argued that 'post-war social legislation was designed primarily to prevent the recurrence of the problems of the 1930s'.¹⁴ Rather than seeing voluntary organizations as disorientated and helpless in the immediate post-war period, it is more useful to see this period as a continuation of pre-war trends in the development of voluntary social services. The CAB and its members still believed in the idea of partnership with the state and there was still a strong drive towards rationalizing its organization and defining its relationship with the state in more precise terms. Where a sense of crisis prevailed, it was, more often than not, due to the increasing demand and expectations placed on the CAB, not due to its decline.

Despite a favourable ideological climate, the CAB struggled to maintain the impetus of the war years. This was partly for financial reasons and partly due to the exhaustive effort that people had put into wartime voluntary work. The CAB successfully adapted

¹³ Rodney Lowe, 'The Second World War, Consensus and the Foundation of the Welfare State', *Twentieth Century British History* 1/2 (1990), 152-182.

¹⁴ Herbert R. Poole, *The Liverpool Council of Social Service 1909-1959* (Liverpool: Liverpool Council of Social Service, 1960), 79.

to the post-war years and continued to work alongside the welfare state. On the whole, the CAB's politics during this period were consensual, although some volunteers were more willing than others to challenge authority in the interests of individual justice. Men and women continued to volunteer and campaign for change including on issues affecting women's working lives and family problems. Voluntary organizations, moreover, were seen as crucial to the reconstruction of post-war British society. For commentators nervous about the increased power of the state, and there were many, organizations such as the CAB could help to relieve the assumed attack on the individual citizen by the state by disseminating accurate explanations of new structures and reporting back to the authorities citizen's reactions and difficulties. CAB workers assumed that the substitution of personal relationships for mass regulation could help citizens make choices whether and how to use public services.

Every effort was made by CAB organizers during the immediate post-war period to strengthen and extend the service. Voluntary action and the state were not mutually exclusive in this period. Civil society grew around the state, its frontier. Although the period immediately after the war was disappointing for leaders of CAB and other voluntary organizations, they continued to be useful. Lip service was paid to experts and their technical knowledge, though their claims of superiority to the layperson were treated with suspicion. At same time, the CAB did not lose sight of the volunteer's distinctive contribution. This was described in the rhetoric of professionalism, reflecting the social status of the men and women who volunteered - in many cases upper middle class and suggesting the ambivalence of certain social groups towards professionals. These groups felt under threat due to the assumed closing gap between lower middle class administrators and civil servants, new technological experts and the working classes.

CAB organization did not break down everywhere during this period. Where the Family Welfare Association continued to run bureaux, or where there was good support from the local Council of Social Service, bureaux thrived. The problems that the CAB dealt with were not necessarily ones the state could effectively solve, or indeed notice. Despite its apolitical stance, politics were at work in the CAB service. There was guarded criticism of the welfare state by its workers. There was a desire for

progressive piecemeal reform of the welfare state, although bureaux organizers and voluntary workers did not question the state's authority or the underlying philosophy of the welfare state. The CAB had much more in common with a 'consensus movement' than with a 'social movement' opposed to the state. The experience of the CAB in the six years following the Second World War shows the success of a voluntary organization adapting to a changing social, political and economic framework, in both its service delivery and its policy roles. Compared with the more professionalized organization it gradually became during the 1970s, the CAB in the late 1940s seemed to be a shadow of an organisation, struggling to survive. Standards deteriorated, it could be argued, and the inheritance for the future was one of 'low aspirations, inertia and resistance to change, together with hostility to professionalism which it took years to eradicate.'¹⁵ This view is overstated, and the survival of the CAB in this period tells us a great deal about the continued vitality of voluntary organizations in the post-war period. Although central funding was removed, local funding was still available. The need for advice and information did not decline. Finally, the CAB's continued popularity with the public shows that the service was not debilitated in these years.

¹⁵ Jean Richards, *Inform, Advise and Support: 50 Years of the Citizens Advice Bureau* (Cambridge: Lutterworth Press, 1989), 162.

5. In the balance, 1951-55

5.1. Introduction

The Conservatives entered government in October 1951 with a promise to 'cut all unnecessary government expenditure'.¹ Otherwise, there was little overt attempt to redefine the relationship between government and people established by Labour.² Many of the wartime austerity measures continued, with the economic consequences of the Korean War continuing to bite. Inflation was not yet under control, affecting the balance of payments. That said, the broader political, ideological and economic climate from 1951 to 1955 was relatively favourable towards the continued expansion of welfare expenditure, and the expansion of the state. However, concern about public expenditure was constant, as exemplified by Peter Thorneycroft's pronouncements from the Board of Trade.³ Treasury hostility to welfare expenditure was justified in 1950 on the grounds that it consumed scarce resources; it was inflationary, diverting resources from those who would save to those with a high propensity to consume (and who would thus divert goods from export to home markets); and it created vested interests committed to high expenditure.⁴ There was similar concern among some Conservative politicians about the presumed sapping of individual initiative by high taxation. Political circumstances did not favour strong growth in welfare expenditure. Public expenditure increased in this period, but fell as a proportion of total GDP from 37 per cent in 1952 to 32.1 per cent in 1955. Within these figures, social services remained a major category of total expenditure, remaining relatively static at about 15 per cent of GDP.⁵ There were constraints on further expansion and expenditure on the

¹ Conservative Party Manifesto (1951) Archive of Conservative Party Manifestoes, <http://www.conservative-party.net/manifestos/1951/1951-conservative-manifesto.shtml> (accessed 30 August 2012).

² Dilwyn Porter, "'Never-never Land': Britain under the Conservatives, 1951-1964" in Nick Tiratsoo (ed.) *From Blitz to Blair: A New History of Britain since 1939* (London: Weidenfeld and Nicolson, 1997), 102-131, 103.

³ Paul Bridgen and Rodney Lowe, *Welfare Policy under the Conservatives, 1951-1961* (London, PRO 1998), 11.

⁴ Ibid. 12.

⁵ Rodney Lowe, *The Welfare State in Britain since 1945* (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2005), 446.

state in this period, which had an impact on voluntary organizations, their finances and their work.

In this chapter, the institutional context and the economic and political environment of voluntary social work are explored. Although some political hostility towards charity and patronage was still evident in this period, hostility outwards the idea of voluntary social service, was not as widespread as some accounts have suggested. In fact, outright hostility to voluntary organizations seems to have been restricted to a minority of groups on the left of the Labour Party. In other cases, Conservative groupings on local councils resented the cost to the rates of making a grant to the CAB. Attitudes towards the CAB were defined locally and reflected the views of individual personalities and the perceived quality of the services that were provided. This chapter explores the different attitudes of local authorities, political parties and civil servants towards funding and cooperation with the CAB on a local and national level. Local relationships continued to be shaped by a number of factors including economic stringency and arguments surrounding democracy and citizenship. Nationally, debates surrounded the status of voluntary organizations in a democracy.

Second, the chapter gives examples of exactly how the CAB service continued to fulfil an important role within the newly reorganised welfare state as a free social service providing information and advice, especially through its work in relation to housing questions, legal aid, the 1953 flood (explored as a case study) and hire purchase. The CAB continued to play a role complementary to the expanding state and to act as a counterweight to bureaucracy. There was, moreover, a noticeable shift in work away from the first-aid function towards a focus on 'personal problems.' These reflected the growth of psychological explanations of poverty.

Third, although some voluntary organizations argued that there was a shortage of voluntary workers during this period, due to changing socio-economic conditions and the changing labour market, a large number of men and women continued to volunteer and offer their professional services free of charge in the pursuit of social justice. Justification by volunteers of their own decisions to volunteer were not, it can be shown, dependent just on middle-class notions of superiority or social control, but equally, contained elements of traditional middle-class liberalism and determination to

help people less fortunate than themselves. Consideration is also given to the challenging and changing intellectual milieu, particularly that of secularisation and its impact on volunteers' motives. It is argued here that volunteers were not all ex-Brigadier Generals and Duchesses, but represented a wider spread of middle class groups.

Finally, this chapter shows how the CAB continued to play an important political role through submissions of evidence to committees on Marriage and Divorce, Housing the Homeless, the new systems of social insurance and other areas. It continued to act as a vehicle for politics outside of party politics.

Historical writing on the 1950s has viewed the decade as either a lost opportunity or a long disappeared 'golden age' of sociability, deference and political participation.⁶ An independent review of the CAB in the 1980s concluded that it owed its survival in the early 1950s to three factors: the support of local authorities, the need for a generalist advice service, and public appreciation of the virtues of the service. These virtues included its independence, informality the enthusiasm and commitment of its workers, as well as its record of assistance during the war.⁷ The author admitted that the 1950s saw the CAB reduce its central staff numbers to near skeletal proportions. The central headquarters became partly financially reliant on funds provided by the NCSS and partly on the contributions of local bureaux. The service during these years was almost entirely locally, and regionally based in a way that it was not before or after.⁸

Perri 6 points out that the 1978 Wolfenden Report on voluntary organizations looked back on the 1950s as a period of drift. He meant this organizationally, not concerning the principle.⁹ Attachment to the principle of voluntarism remained strong throughout.

⁶ Vernon Bogdanor and Robert Skidelsky (eds.) *The Age of Affluence, 1951-1964* (London: Macmillan, 1970); Arthur Marwick, *British Society since 1945* (London, Penguin, 1982); Lawrence Black and Hugh Pemberton, *An Affluent Society? Britain's Post-War 'Golden Age' Revisited* (Farnham: Ashgate, 2004); Dominic Sandbrook, *Never Had it So Good: A History of Britain from Suez to the Beatles: 1956-63* (London: Little, Brown 2005).

⁷ *Review of the National Association of Citizens Advice Bureaux* (1983-4 Cmnd. 9139), 12.

⁸ *Ibid.*

⁹ Perri 6 and Diana Leat, 'Inventing the British Voluntary Sector by Committee: From Wolfenden to Deakin', *Non-Profit Studies* 1/2 (1997), 33-45.

Much writing by charities and voluntary organizations themselves in the 1970s, looking back, have tended to portray the 1950s as wasted years. Such portrayals have looked at the low financial resources and tended to assume that these reflected a period of 'marking time'. These arguments are used to lend weight and justification to subsequent developments in the history of voluntary organizations. Similarly, writing in the 1980s, Jean Richards (herself a former paid regional and headquarters worker in the CAB) was less than complimentary about the effect of the cash-starved years on the efficiency, but also importantly, the professionalism of the organization, (if, indeed it was still possible to call the CAB an organization.) She argued that, following the withdrawal of central government funding in 1951, the deterioration of the service was marked and the influence of those ten years without funding took a long time to overcome. The service 'ticked over', on limited funds, with volunteers doing most of the work and with limited central information available. In her eyes it left a legacy of dilettante attitudes which were not easy to root out: 'The inheritance was one of low aspirations, inertia and resistance to change, together with hostility towards professionalism which took years to eradicate.'¹⁰ Richards went so far as to suggest that it might have been wiser to start again from scratch, were it not for the strong foundations set up during the Second World War. By strong foundations, Richards may have been thinking of the power of the central headquarters over the local bureaux.

Another account of voluntary organizations in the 1950s is provided by Maria Brenton who argues that there was a strong bias towards statutory involvement in the social services, and that one factor behind this was the strength of political opposition towards voluntary organizations and the fact that more demanding criteria were being applied to the activities of voluntary organizations. Where there were gaps in statutory provision, voluntary organizations failed to fill the gaps for three reasons: first, the dominant assumption that social services should be a public responsibility; second, a

¹⁰ Jean Richards, *Inform, Advise and Support: 50 Years of the Citizens Advice Bureau* (Cambridge: Lutterworth Press, 1989), 162.

lack of general support for the development of welfare functions by voluntary organizations; and third a lack of finance.¹¹

This chapter explores the reasons behind this sense of uncertainty, and attempts to reconcile it with the continuing potential and resilience of the CAB. The CAB was able to adapt itself to the continued austerity and stringent economic conditions of the early 1950s. Yet, the National CAB Committee admitted that the service was still not as well known to the public and to policymakers as it might be.¹² Despite the rhetorical support shown by politicians and policymakers towards voluntary effort in the field of welfare, the CAB organization was severely affected by cuts in government funding. But the uncertainty surrounding some voluntary organizations reflected wider concerns that were not specific to voluntary organizations, but related to wider questions about Britain's post-war settlement. These concerns lay under the surface of the post-war attempts to reconcile freedom and democracy with control and planning. Debate continued throughout the 1950s. Also this sense of uncertainty reflected the ambivalence towards the post-war social settlement and social change that can be found within the wider voluntary movement. It provides evidence of the continuing libertarian streak within British political culture.

¹¹ Maria Brenton, *The Voluntary Sector in British Social Services* (Harlow: Longman, 1985).

¹² National Council of Social Service, *Annual Report 1950/51* (London: National Council of Social Service, 1951).

5.2. Aims and tactics

In this chapter the aims of the CAB are considered in the context of the early 1950s. This was a period when, by most standards, life was returning to a period of relative normalcy compared with the war years and the immediate post-war period covered in the previous chapters. The CAB still attempted to incorporate the individual into the new social democratic polity. This involved educating people in their new social rights as outlined in the post-war legislation of the Labour Government. The early 1950s was notable for the marked absence of a discussion of the intricacies of social rights. Social citizenship was a status bestowed on people following the new social welfare legislation of 1948, including the National Health Service Act, 1948. However little was said about the exercise of those rights and little done to educate people of their rights. As Pinker puts it, the failure to raise levels of civic competence, and knowledge of social services arose from a naive view of the relationship between social legislation and the public's consciousness of their rights and obligations.¹³ Against this general dearth of publicity about the welfare state and legislation more widely following cuts in government expenditure on publicity in the early 1950s, the CAB conducted valuable work in continuing to alert people to their social rights.

Bureaucrats and bureaucracy remained unpopular. A report in 1954 in Labour supporting *The Daily Herald*: 'John Citizen can beat The Little Tin Gods – a report on the victory of common sense and human understanding', specifically asked readers to write in with examples of 'bureaucratic tomfoolery'. Mr John Parks, a tenant of Worcester City Council, had built a rockery outside his house, but the council were threatening to flatten it and give all the tenants on the estate a stretch of ground to replace their individual front gardens: 'The Prodnoses all over Britain are constantly trying this sort of lark. But they don't always succeed', the article concluded.¹⁴

Against this background, the CAB sought to achieve its aims of informing the citizen of their rights and duties in relation to the many social problems present in the post-war world. One of the biggest post-war problems was housing, and housing queries made up one in five of all enquiries during this period. There was a continuing demand for

¹³ Robert Pinker, *Social Theory and Social Policy* (London: Heinemann Educational, 1970), 146.

¹⁴ *The Daily Herald*, 12 August 1954.

information and advice on rent and tenancy agreements, house purchase and concerns over the repair of properties. Such questions were set against the background of the Conservative Government's divisive housing policy. Housing was one of the few areas of welfare policy that provoked division along party lines. The secretary of the Bootle CAB in Liverpool, highlighted an increase in the early 1950s of cases in which large numbers of houses were becoming uninhabitable because landlords were apparently unable to meet the cost of repairs. London bureaux stated that the problems they received demonstrated that property was falling out of use owing to the 'seeming' inability of landlords to make repairs.¹⁵

Bureaux were a vital resource for informing tenants of their rights under the various Housing and Rent Control Acts, a fact that was not lost on the Labour party. During a House of Commons debate in December 1954, on the impact on National Assistance of rent increases sanctioned following the Housing Repairs and Rents Act, 1954, Eric Fletcher, Labour MP for Islington East, London noted that many tenants who had found their rents recently increased had been able to get advice from a bureau and had discovered, in a great many cases, that landlords had tried to increase rents which they were not entitled to raise.¹⁶

Bureaux also continued to provide services for those made homeless and forced to have recourse to the temporary provision made by welfare authorities under the National Assistance Act. In Liverpool, the Personal Service Society, by invitation of the local Medical Officer of Health, sent a social worker once a week to visit homeless families in temporary accommodation and to provide advice and support on budgeting. CAB staff were encouraged to cooperate with statutory sources of help and provide details of families at risk where possible.¹⁷ Exeter CSS and CAB meanwhile provided a service of family advice and counselling to families in danger of eviction. Following a conference held jointly between the National Council of Social Service and the National Council of Family Casework Agencies, in November 1953, the NCSS put

¹⁵ LMA AC 73/46/8 CAB Committee Papers, Report on National Conference on Social Work 26 September 1953.

¹⁶ Hansard, HC (Series 5) Vol. 535 col. 2393 (17 December 1954).

¹⁷ LMA AC 73/46/8 CAB Committees Papers 1952-7, Paper no. 4. memo, 'Housing the Homeless', 16 February 1954.

together a memorandum which drew heavily on the experience of the CAB in setting out ways that voluntary organizations could help families living in temporary accommodation provided under the National Assistance Act. In drawing together evidence of housing difficulties for the memorandum, bureaux were asked to take note of cases for three months from April 1954, particularly in the London County Council area.

The CAB also attempted to educate and counsel people in their personal relationships. The number of matrimonial cases continued to rise, averaging around 3,000 per month in the early 1950s. Liverpool dealt with 192 matrimonial cases per month; Harrogate, Yorkshire dealt with sixty-nine; Marylebone, London thirty-three, and Mitcham, Surrey twenty-seven. CAB headquarters, in evidence presented to the Royal Commission on Marriage in 1952, were impressed by the increased number of matrimonial problems. The CAB therefore stressed the need for improved means of providing education for marriage and homemaking.¹⁸ This concern reflected the wider moral panic in the 1950s surrounding marriage, despite its overall stability.

In other cases women sought help where there was difficulty in proving a case for divorce. Marylebone bureau quoted a case of a woman who, eight years ago, had met, and later married, a man who claimed to be a South African Army officer. He had told her that his Army service was over and he had taken a civilian job but he told her nothing in detail about his affairs. She found that he was dishonest and in frequent trouble with the police; he was in prison for a time and was now wanted by the police. He had left her and his sixteen month old baby to avoid arrest. He sent no money, she did not know where he was and believed the name he used was false. Had she been able to hire a private investigator, a great load of worry and bewilderment might be lifted from her mind.¹⁹

Many of the matrimonial cases included a legal element. The Lord Chancellor's Advisory Committee estimated that four fifths of all litigation presently receiving legal

¹⁸ *Minutes of Evidence, Royal Commission on Marriage and Divorce* (London: HMSO, 1952), 781; LMA AC 73/46/8 CAB Ctte 1st File 1952-7, Letter from Miss K. M. Oswald to Secretary of the Royal Commission on Marriage and Divorce, 10 July 1953.

¹⁹ *Minutes of Evidence, Royal Commission on Marriage and Divorce* (London: HMSO, 1952), 783. Unfortunately the records do not reveal whether the CAB were able to help or not.

aid was composed of cases for the dissolution of marriage.²⁰ Bureaux continued to perform a vital role for people with matrimonial problems these included those abandoned by their spouse and who had difficulties tracking them down. In all such cases, maintenance could not be claimed if the whereabouts of the husband was unknown. Women often asked for help in giving a summons for maintenance where the husband refused to pay.

Property rights were a problem for couples seeking separation where the couple lived together. In a case brought before the Harrogate bureau, a woman sought advice over her husband who gambled and drank and had sold the house twice to pay debts. On both occasions the wife had paid with her own earnings to keep the property, but she was now prevented from doing this through illness. One small bureau found that of the ten cases brought by wives in one month about separation, despite having good grounds for separation, eight were deterred from applying for fear of hardship.²¹

The CAB also continued to provide access to social justice through legal aid. The 1949 Legal Aid and Advice Act suffered from the fact that its enactment coincided with the sterling crisis of 1949-50. Due to a Treasury veto in 1950, Part I of the Act, which extended legal aid to County Court proceedings, was not brought into operation. The Act had made provision for legal advice to anyone through area committees of the Law Society on payment of a small fee of 2s 6d. However, this feature was also a victim of the Treasury veto and was not brought into effect. Consequently, local CAB and poor man's lawyers continued to provide free advice to individuals in a number of cases where legal advice was required by people of limited means.

In 1954 the NCSS committee conducted a survey of all legal arrangements in bureaux across the country, noting that the failure to implement all parts of the Legal Aid and Advice Act had put a heavy burden on voluntary agencies. Of 428 bureaux consulted, 260 answered the survey circular. Forty-four had no relevant arrangements; thirty-five would consult solicitors on behalf of enquirers; thirty-seven would refer cases to an independent poor man's lawyer or to neighbouring bureaux. Sixty bureaux had solicitors attending at bureaux for regular sessions or by appointment; eighty-four

²⁰ Ibid.

²¹ Ibid. 783.

regularly referred enquirers to solicitors working in the bureau office.²² In London, twenty-five of the forty-nine LCSS-run bureaux had lawyers who attended regularly. In those run by the FWA, lawyers attended Marylebone, Paddington, Lewisham, Islington, Pimlico, Fulham and Chelsea bureaux. Liverpool's Poor Man Lawyer conducted over 1,558 interviews in the year ending September 1953.

To make matters worse, traditional outlets for legal advice began to suffer from lack of funding as many of those who had funded them mistakenly assumed that the passing of the 1949 Act had reduced the need for such services. The CAB argued that the failure to implement the relevant parts of the Act had made the need for voluntary legal advice much greater, not less. CAB throughout the country making statistical returns, recorded, over the period 1951 to 1955, an average of just under 4,000 enquiries defined as 'legal', or requiring some sort of legal advice or assistance of a legal nature. Matrimonial problems, averaging around 2,500 a month over the same period, and housing, 13,000 per month, frequently contained a 'legal element', and here CAB were also able to help.

The majority of applications for legal aid, (ninety per cent in the case of Exeter), concerned petitions for, or defence in, divorce proceedings.²³ The bureau in Southwark, south London, had visits from clients wishing to take action against a dentist for extracting a child's teeth in error and against a hotel for a plague of earwigs spoiling their holiday. Accidents at work were a common reason to visit the honorary legal adviser of the CAB. In 1952, a widow whose husband was accidentally killed in Germany while serving in the forces approached Southwark Bureau with a summons for rent from her landlord. Bureau workers were able to complete the form and refer her for legal advice. Other problems for which free legal advice was given between 1951 and 1955 included making a will, an appeal against a prison sentence, contesting a family inheritance and troubles with consumer goods. In 1951 a van driver approached Southwark bureau because his load had been stolen. The employer was attempting to blame him and he was referred to a lawyer. In Luton, legal problems concerned room

²² LMA 4016 IS/A/01/032(5) NCSS Executive Committee Paper 5, Note on the Voluntary Legal Advice Services, 13 January 1954.

²³ LMA 4016/IS/A/04/32(5) Letter George Haynes to Richard Clements, 8 April 1953.

tenancies, advice over compensation, debt summons, injuries at work, matrimonial and custody cases.

CAB continued to offer legal advice in a large proportion of its bureaux. To meet the continuing demand for legal help for those not able to pay, and those able to pay only a small amount but cautious about approaching a solicitor, the CAB maintained a close relationship with existing voluntary services giving legal advice and often provided it where none was available. These steps were taken to fill the gap pending the implementation of the remaining clauses of the Legal Aid and Advice Act 1949, which came into operation in October 1950. Arrangements were made in close consultation with the Law Society and the Bar Council, who encouraged their members to cooperate with the bureaux in providing such services and drew up rules governing the way in which they should help. CAB staff received information circulars on the workings of the Act, and were trained at the CAB's regular day and half day training schools.

The CAB considered its function to be that of 'oiling the wheels' in relation to the new legal aid service. Clearing up misunderstandings and offering explanations to those with questions about the new arrangements seemed to make up a high proportion of the legal assistance that took place. Some bureaux provided a base for visiting local secretaries of area and local legal committees, and often helped to complete application forms. The actual Civil Aid Certificate application form was long and complicated and required a *prima facie* case to be made.

5.3. Structure and resources

The number of bureaux dropped from approximately 508 to 450 between 1951 and 1955. The number making statistical returns also fell from around 300 to 250. From those bureau making returns, the total monthly number of enquiries from October 1951 to April 1955 averaged around 60,000. The total estimated for all bureaux was around 95,000. The top five problems as a proportion of all enquiries taken from the recorded figures were: housing queries (12,492), general information requests (10,515), family and personal problems (8,732), legal problems (3,673) and matrimonial problems (2,691). Other categories of much smaller proportions (typically taking up between 4 and 5 per cent of all enquiries) included: employment, civic information, health and medical, social insurance and miscellaneous.

The financial situation facing the CAB and the NCSS was bleak during the early 1950s. The Conservatives did not restore the central grant for headquarters services that was halted in 1951 and the NCSS was forced to adapt its finances to the drop in government funding. Its total income dropped in real terms by 11 per cent between 1951 and 1955. This drop was due almost entirely to the removal of the government grant for CAB work. Voluntary donations to the NCSS remained constant in real terms (barring a slight decrease between 1951 and 1952). There was a similar story about other voluntary organizations' finances. In 1954 two social workers, Irene Green and G. W. Murphy found, in a study of over 300 voluntary organizations in Manchester and north-west England, that voluntary giving in 1951, net of income tax relief provided 43 per cent of total income (compared with 46 per cent in 1938). They concluded that in the current light of levels of taxation, this was not an unsatisfactory rate of giving.²⁴

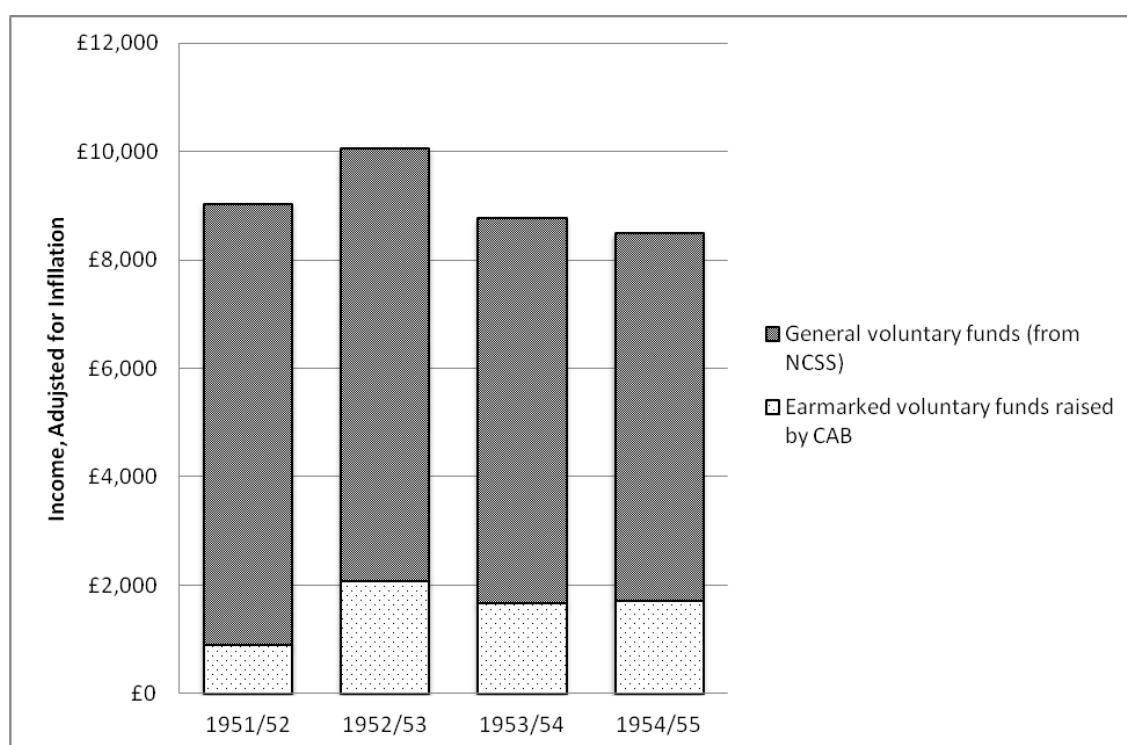
Despite these developments, the finances of the NCSS were insufficient for the task of expanding and developing new voluntary social services alongside the expanding welfare state. This point was made in David Owen's 1960 history of charity.²⁵ However, the confusion and pessimism of some commentators, including Margaret

²⁴ Irene Ward and G. W. Murphy, 'The Income of the Voluntary Social Services of Manchester and Salford in 1951 and a Comparison with 1938', *Social Welfare* (Autumn 1954) 78-96.

²⁵ David Owen, *English Philanthropy 1660-1960* (Mass. Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1964).

Simey, about the voluntary sector at this time was due, in fact, to an over abundance of opportunities for voluntary organizations. Voluntary organizations faced greater demands for their services. The systems of finance and management of voluntary organizations did not keep pace with demand. The challenge, therefore, for voluntary organizations, as an editorial in the 1954 edition of *Social Service* stated, was to change a financial scheme that relied on the generosity of a few large subscribers towards a more broadly based scheme.²⁶

Figure 3 CAB Headquarters' Income (Adjusted for Inflation) 1951-55²⁷



AS Figure 3 shows, the NCSS and CAB immediately began a search for alternative sources of funds. Local bureaux were invited to contribute towards the continuance of the information service that headquarters provided. In the 1952-3 financial year, £1,385 was raised from individual bureaux. The CAB committee sought ways to diversify its income and at the 1951 conference, held jointly with the Joint Committee for Councils of Social Service, the National Committee's report suggested that consideration should be given to working out a scheme of information and advisory services available on a subscription basis bearing in mind the contribution that this might make to CAB

²⁶ 'Voluntary Service in an Age of Change', *Social Service: A Quarterly Survey* 28/2 (1954), 50-2, 51.

²⁷ LMA AC 73/46/2 Finance, 1944-1959.

central finances as well as enabling workers to carry out more effectively the work that they are already doing.²⁸ The need to make the service available on a subscription basis was driven by the need for funds to maintain the Information Service of the NCSS. As a memo setting out the case argued in 1952, the number of trained and semi-trained social workers was so small that other voluntary workers needed access to information services. The criticisms against such a scheme were the dangers of briefing inadequately qualified people to carry out social work, cheapening the value of CAB work, and legal implications. Behind the scheme lay the idea that information could be used to bring the community together. The field of possible subscribers considered included: industrial and commercial undertakings; welfare sections of certain central government departments; certain local authority departments and/or mayors and chairmen of councils; members of the House of Commons for constituencies outside London; almoners, psychiatric social workers and TB Welfare Officers, attached to hospitals and clinics.²⁹

In October 1953 a special meeting of the National CAB Committee was called to discuss this possible extension. A resolution was proposed and carried unanimously that that CAB information services be made available to organizations on a subscription basis. A sub-committee was appointed to consult the Industrial Welfare Society, and the Institute of Personnel Management and seek their views.³⁰ A CAB exhibit was established at the Institute of Personal Management Conference in Harrogate in October 1953.³¹ It was reported that both the Institute and the Industrial Welfare Society had warmly welcomed the proposals.

Local finances remained variable across the country. In some cases local authorities were keen to implement expenditure cuts. Miss Elizabeth Smith, from Coventry, stated in 1952 that the bureau Chair, W. S. Heatley, had appealed for funds to the local community. The appeal was sent out to 700 firms and individuals. However, only

²⁸ LMA AC 73/46/10 CAB 68 Ext service 1951-59, Circular, 18 February 1952.

²⁹ LMA AC 73/46/10 CAB 68 Extension of the Service 1951-59, Memo on the Proposed Extension of the CAB Service for Consideration by K. M. Oswald, 21 October 1952.

³⁰ LMA AC 73/46/10 CAB 68 Extension of the Service 1951-59, Minutes of the National Committee of Citizens Advice Bureaux, 23 October 1953.

³¹ LMA AC 73/46/10 CAB 68 Extension of the Service 1951-59, Letter from V. Weekes to K. M. Oswald, 21 September 1953

thirteen replied, with contributions totalling just thirty pounds. Of the thirteen contributors, six made it explicit that this was not an annual subscription towards the work of the bureau. Smith was angry that firms like Standard Tractor Company, for whom the bureau had done a lot of work, and 'who pay fantastic wages', would not make a donation of even half a guinea. She concluded, sadly, that the bureau could not be run on donations alone and she would have to step down, as the salary paid to the secretary was insufficient in her case, as she had no private income.³² The estimated cost of dealing with each enquiry was seven and a half pence. In the 1952/3 financial year, the Coventry bureau operated on a budget of £412, of which roughly half went on salaries and wages, and a further £72 on rent and rates. Its work was also financed by a £350 grant from the local authority (recently reduced from £500), and £80 worth of donations.

The local situation varied, and Coventry was an example of a CAB that continued despite the threat of financial stringency. At headquarters, despite attempts to increase finances, cuts to expenditure were necessary. The cuts did not seriously reduce the amount of work that had to be done, which, it was noted, was impossible to reduce.³³ Miss Oswald also reported to the NCSS committee, that the CAB were not disheartened about the situation as one of the effects of the necessity of collecting financial contributions from local bureau was that some bureaux had come to feel themselves more closely involved in the national service.³⁴ One important piece of work was the establishment of an emergency bureau in Lynton, Devon, the site of severe flooding in August 1952, at the request of the local authority. The bureau functioned for one week, and received eighty enquiries. Trained social workers were recruited at two days notice from Birmingham, Bristol and Torquay.³⁵

³² LMA AC 73/46/38 Coventry, Letter from E. Smith to K. M. Oswald, 14 February 1952.

³³ LMA 4016/IS/A/01/032(5) National Council Social Service Executive Committee, Reports of Departments and Associated Groups, Paper 7, 10 July 1952.

³⁴ LMA 4016/IS/A/01/032(5) National Council of Social Service Executive Committee Minutes, 9 October 1952.

³⁵ The 1952 flood in Lynmouth saw the setting up of an emergency bureau in nearby Lynton to help the victims. In collaboration with the Family Welfare Association, two workers were sent to administer the relief fund for victims. The bureau was run with the help of a bureau organiser from Barnstaple at the request of the town clerk. An

In the absence of central government funding, local arrangements determined the quality of CAB information and advice service. The attitudes of local authorities were more crucial to the financial health of individual bureaux and of the entire service than at any other period. Of the 520 bureaux in 1951, it was estimated that approximately two thirds received some financial support from their local authorities. These donations ranged enormously in size. Some provided no more than a reduction in local rates, or provided free heating and electricity in a room. In 1953, Mitcham made an annual grant of £1,480. Other local authorities making annual grants of over £500 included many in London: Ilford, Westminster, Acton, Chelsea, Woolwich, Barnes, and Wimbledon. Coulsdon and Purley in Surrey, Walsall in the West Midlands, and Brighton councils also made annual grants of over £500. In many of these cases, the local authority did not have a separate local information centre funded through the local rates and chose to use the CAB on an agency basis (Watford also operated on this basis). Others, such as Acton, ran local authority and voluntarily run information services simultaneously. The reasons why Acton choose to operate two separate information services is not clear. There was, however, a clear delineation between the types of services the two information offices would offer. The local authority information service offered local information concerning local authority matters, while the CAB office offered advice and information relating to social and legal work. The CAB also performed a social case work function in addition to providing information and advice.

Despite cuts in funding, the CAB headquarters and regional organizing committees could still hold weekend schools at Leeds for workers from the North West, Yorkshire, Durham and Tyneside. Over eighty people attended, around two thirds of who were workers from bureaux. Others included Children's Officers, Almoners, Mental Health workers, wardens of Community Associations and members of local authorities. Every

additional team of social workers was organised in London but were stopped from travelling down at the request of the Lynton bureau. The Regional Officer for the South West, Richard Cottam, suspected that other voluntary organisations - notably the WVS and the Red Cross - were making difficulties, though he had no evidence to support this. Miss Crossley from the Torquay Council of Social Service office offered to 'butt in' during her holiday at Lynton with the offer of help. Eventually the request for additional help came from the Town Council on 29 August. Social workers from Torquay, Birmingham, and London were dispatched. See LMA AC 73/46/51 Lynton.

effort was made to maintain an adequate service for bureaux with depleted headquarters and no field staff, but some decline in the quality of work of some smaller bureaux, due to lack of supervision, could hardly be avoided. In 1953, in an attempt to reduce central costs, the National CAB Committee agreed to meet three rather than four times a year. In 1953, rather than hosting its own conference, the CAB held a session at the British National Conference on Social Work.

Just as important as the supply of political good-will and financial resources was the supply of people who continued to give voluntary information and advice. The continued importance and significance of volunteering relied on a supply of people willing to devote their time to voluntary advice work. There is little doubt that the number of volunteers was still lower than its wartime peak, but the numbers seems to have stabilised compared with the decline in the immediate post-war years. CAB volunteers numbered around 5,000 in approximately 500 bureaux.

In 1953, CAB headquarters argued that, 'The efficiency of the service was, of course, largely due to the fact that so many of the workers were highly qualified and skilled and were prepared to further their knowledge by attendance at residential courses and schools.'³⁶ The volunteer was assumed to have the time and inclination to learn about new legislation through training courses. The methods of recruitment (word of mouth and patronage) and the sites where bureaux volunteers were found were the typical middle class associations. In 1953, it was reported that some bureaux organizers had experienced difficulty in obtaining recruits, others reported success in gaining new recruits from civil defence volunteer welfare sections, local Women's Clubs, Townswomen's Guilds, Rotary, and Toc H clubs.³⁷ The typical volunteer continued to be female, middle class not in paid work, handpicked and carefully selected. An example was Mrs Joyce Coomb. She was married to an engineer with three children, and was a social worker with the Finchley and Friern Barnet Citizens' Advice Bureau and President of the London branch of the Mother's Union.

³⁶ LMA AC 73/46/8 CAB Committee Papers, Report on National Conference on Social Work Report from CAB Domestic Session, 26 September 1953.

³⁷ Ibid.

An example of a different type of volunteer can be found in Coventry's bureau. In 1954 Mrs Vera Bonhomme replaced the outgoing Secretary, Kathleen Barragan nee Smith. Bonhomme had been an undergraduate at Manchester University where she read Psychology. After post-graduate studies in Social and Applied Psychology at the University of Vienna, she took a course in Psychiatric Social Work at Maudsley Hospital for Nervous Diseases in London. From 1938 to 1953 she was in charge of the information department at the Coventry GEC Works, and was a member of the Association of Libraries and Information bureaux. She had volunteered previously, and spoke several European languages. She straight away set about dealing with cases of consumer rights concerning holiday bookings where cancellations made well in advance were met with demands for large sums in compensation. In she began a home making course for young couples in partnership with the further education department of the Coventry Education Committee. Bonhomme was an example of a volunteer trained in the new techniques of psychiatric social work.

Because sources are scarce for this period, motives are hard to assess for CAB volunteers. One example is Florence Phillips, of Tunbridge Wells, who continued to gain great pleasure from her voluntary work. She continued to write to HQ with anecdotes and tales of woe resulting from her work. CAB work was clearly an important part of her identity as a Christian. These anecdotes included accounts of conversations overheard on the local buses between people discussing the bureau and its work.³⁸ Perhaps Phillips gained pleasure and relief from loneliness as a widow. In 1954, a girl sought her advice on how to divorce her errant and faithless husband who had decamped to Canada. Not only did Phillips represent her in court but, according to the advocate's firm, Messrs Dunlop and Daby, she helped to win the case for the girl, as well as ensuring that the amount the NAB assessed her to pay in legal aid, was returned.³⁹ In 1954, she wrote of her frustration and anger at the description of bureaux

³⁸ LMA AC 73/46/61 Tunbridge Wells, 14 May 1953. Florence Phillips wrote to K. M. Oswald in May 1953, "Not business only fun! Two bus stories! I sat behind 2 women. No. 1: 'I had a letter today from those people my son knew in Germany. I can't read it. What can I do?' No. 2: 'Take it to the Citizens Advice Bureau'. No. 1: 'Do they do that kind of thing?' No 2: 'Oh yes, anything. It's a Public Convenience'."

³⁹ LMA AC 73/46/61 Tunbridge Wells, Letter from F. Phillips to K. M. Oswald, 10 December 1954.

work in a novel written by a former worker, Phyllis Fletcher, called *The Owl at your Service*.⁴⁰ Themes of maternalism and a desire to bridge the perceived gulf between the classes, in her words, 'to be one of them', and to be 'like a mother to us all' were present in her writings. She went on: 'I love people. For them to trust and love me a little is the wish of my life. To make money out of those who in sorrow or perplexity have come to me – would feel like blasphemy.'⁴¹

⁴⁰ Phillida Fletcher, *The Owl at Your Service* (London: Ernest Benn, 1955). It has not been possible to find out why this novel was written, or any records of Phillida Fletcher's work for the bureau. The inside cover of the book reads, 'The author worked in a Citizens' Advice Bureau, and her book – at times purely amusing, at others tragic – shows the wonderful work the Bureaux are doing. In 1951 they answered over a million queries and they have proved themselves an invaluable – if hitherto unacknowledged – service in the Welfare State, if only in helping to restore personal initiative which such a State tends to destroy.

⁴¹ LMA AC 73/46/61 Tunbridge Wells, Letter from F. Phillips to K. M. Oswald, 20 April 1955.

5.4. External relations

Relations with other organizations dispensing information and advice were sometimes tense. The demand for information services and advice was demonstrated by the continuing importance of advice columns run by newspapers. Writing in *The Guardian* in 1953, Catherine Heath, herself a former group officer of the CAB, described her work for the *News of the World's* John Hilton Bureau.⁴² The John Hilton Bureau was set up to deal with wartime problems. By the early 1950s it was receiving over 3,000 letters a week and 30 permanent members of staff were engaged to answer the letters.⁴³ Another 70 staff were engaged in clerical work and checking. Heath wrote, 'What startled me was the utter helplessness of these people in the face of the complexity of modern society; the failure of deserving cases to make use of welfare agencies existing for their benefit because they are ignorant of them.' She went on, 'These advice columns are apparently the only guide today of a vast mass of our population who live their days in a perpetual state of terror and confusion, and to whom life is a fast game of which they do not understand the rules.' Her article sparked an angry response from Frank Gardiner, Borough Librarian and Information Officer in Luton. He helped extensively with the CAB and wrote to *The Guardian* urging the public to use CAB rather than newspaper columns. The great advantage of the former, he argued, was that they were not restricted by the information that could be conveyed in a letter. Some problems needed many hours of unravelling. He urged more local authorities to recognise the need for such bureaux.⁴⁴

Leaders of CAB still claimed that all approached the bureau, that it was a universal social service. In 1954, Southwark CAB conducted a survey of the 604 enquirers who

⁴² John Hilton was a Professor of Industrial Relations at Cambridge University. On the outbreak of war, in September 1939, he became Director of Home Publicity at the Ministry of Information, but stood down in the following June and resumed broadcasting, with 'John Hilton talking', speaking largely to those affected directly and personally by the war, those in the Forces, those left behind, those subject to industrial conscription, and so on. He was approached in March 1942 by the *News of the World* Ltd to do the same sort of thing for the newspaper. So he became Director of the *News of the World* Industrial Advice Bureau which, after his death in August 1943, was renamed after him. Based in Cambridge, the Bureau called on a panel drawn from dozens of professions, with expertise to deal with readers' queries.

⁴³ *The Manchester Guardian*, 19 November 1953.

⁴⁴ *The Manchester Guardian*, 25 November 1953.

called between April and June of that year. It classified them according to the classes used in the 1942 Beveridge Report. It found that wage earners were still the largest category followed at some distance by housewives. When comparing the figures with those from a similar enquiry conducted in 1945, it was shown that among the smaller groups of people coming for advice and information – those above working age, and others of working age not gainfully employed – there been a marked increase, thus implying that the CAB, as well as filling a general need, fulfilled specific needs among elderly and handicapped people.⁴⁵

The press continued to support the CAB. In 1954 weekly magazine, *The Times Weekly Review* produced an editorial praising its work as an adjunct of government and the quality of its staff. It argued that the service oiled the wheels of government by ensuring that people understood their rights and duties in the modern state.⁴⁶ A writer from *The Observer*, Alison Settle, was complimentary in her column.⁴⁷ CAB headquarters were active in their approach to publicity, often writing letters to national newspapers in an attempt to raise awareness of the service. For example, a doctor wrote a letter to *The Guardian* stating that the sick cared for in their homes required answers to numerous questions about social services, national insurance, etc. 'The trouble is that there are so many different authorities,' he wrote. 'What is badly needed is somebody who knows all the ropes'. K. M. Oswald, the Secretary of the CAB wrote in response arguing that the CAB provided such answers, while acknowledging the difficulty of providing these services in small towns and country areas. She suggested that public spirited people might wish to act together with a near-by bureau, collecting the problems of sick or old people.⁴⁸

Relations with the developing social work profession were good. The 1954 article in *The Times Weekly Review* contained a quote from the *Journal of the Society of Housing Managers*:

⁴⁵ LMA ACC 3158 Uncatalogued/ June 1944-Late 1950s/Box 2, CAB Comments on Enquiry Kinds of Callers 1954.

⁴⁶ *The Times Weekly Review*, 11 November 1954.

⁴⁷ *The Observer*, 2 January 1955.

⁴⁸ *The Manchester Guardian*, 18 December 1952; 23 December 1952, 4.

The story of the Citizens' Advice Bureaux is an encouraging example of a creative effort to humanize the impersonal and bureaucratic background of present-day life; an attempt to save the individual from becoming swamped in the complex details of the regulations designed to help him and prevent his exploitation. Largely owing to the quality of the personnel the bureaux have made for themselves a reputation for friendliness and reliability – they are indeed a credit to democracy.⁴⁹

Relations with lawyers were not always as smooth. CAB also received complaints about solicitors. In Gloucester in 1954, a widow complained about a solicitor who had conducted a land survey on a property and advised her that could proceed with the purchase and renovation of the property. In fact the council had listed it for demolition. The solicitor was asked to appear before the disciplinary committee of the Law Society and fined £250 for unbecoming conduct.⁵⁰ Where a CAB offered legal aid or advice, a common arrangement was for a solicitor to help voluntarily once or twice a week. Other less satisfactory arrangements existed. For example, In Bargoed, south Wales, J. B. Jones, the local bureau secretary, a trade unionist and Labour supporter, was keen to give legal advice, but with the proviso that he took no responsibility for it.⁵¹ The quality of a bureau's service was sometimes dependent on the quality of the relationship with the local legal community. The organizer of the East Grinstead bureau, for example, experienced some problems in cooperating with the local secretary of the Law Society. In particular it was noted by headquarters that in some areas the arrangements with local Law Societies were extremely limited. There was a continuing problem with getting legal advice in country districts where there was no bureau service.⁵²

Good relations with other voluntary organizations were important for providing voluntary workers, many of whom continued to volunteer for more than one organization. The CAB maintained close relations with Rotary, and the Law Society. It also maintained a close relationship with the WVS, which was clearly set out in a written memorandum of agreement drawn up for use in the Eastern Region of the UK

⁴⁹ *The Times Weekly Review*, 11 November 1954.

⁵⁰ LMA AC 73/46/43 Gloucester, Letter from Davis to K. M. Oswald, 14 September 1954.

⁵¹ LMA AC 73/46/27 Bargoed, Report of Visit, 11 September 1951.

⁵² LMA 4016/IS/A/04/032, Letter from K. M. Oswald to T. Burden, 13 March 1952.

in October 1951. This set out the nature of the relationship between the WVS and the CAB where the work was undertaken in collaboration between the two organizations. The memorandum stressed the local nature of the CAB in contrast with the WVS and recognised the policy, financial and advisory role of the NCSS. WVS workers were to treat CAB as a separate activity and WVS Centre organizers were not allowed to undertake CAB work, but could appoint a CAB organizer from among their staff. The agreement also made possible a mixed rota of men and women.⁵³

For a minority of Labour supporters, the volunteer was perceived either as a do-gooder taking up the role that should rightfully be done by a paid employee, but at the same time, they represented the link with the past in the form of mutual aid, co-operation, fellowship and community. As the 1950s progressed and Labour descended into infighting, the role of the voluntary worker became still more blurred. The Labour party entered a period of relative confusion following the 1951 election defeat. Its attitude towards voluntary organizations and charity was still ambivalent. Labour's traditionally hostility to anything emitting so much as a whiff of charity continued in this period, but only on the extremes of the party. While Aneurin Bevan criticised the patchwork of paternalisms that in his view constituted voluntary action, other Labour politicians, such as Michael Young, were more positive. Young continued to champion the use of voluntary organizations, particular mutual aid organizations, as deliverers of welfare services, especially in situations where concerns for efficiency threatened to over-run the democratic values of public services. His concern with the overly powerful state was shared by those libertarian supporters of the left. In 1952, the ethical socialist union set out its case for the use of voluntary organizations as providers of welfare services.⁵⁴

To what extent was it possible to say that there was a consensus between the parties on the use of voluntary organizations in the delivery of social services? While Labour had funded the CAB, and only cut it due to the need to make cutbacks in light of the

⁵³ LMA AC 73/46/59 Stevenage, Agreement between Women's Voluntary Service and National Council of Social Service concerning CAB, October 1951.

⁵⁴ See Fred Mulley's letter to *Socialist Commentary*, October 1953, p.243; Lawrence Black, 'Social Democracy as a Way of Life: Fellowship and the Socialist Union, 1951-9', *Twentieth Century British History*, 10/4, 1999, 499-539.

Korean war, the Conservative government of 1951 to 1955 refused to reopen the question central financing of headquarters from government sources. Labour encouraged the involvement of voluntary organizations in local authority services.

The question of government finance was reopened by the CAB in the early 1950s. The Secretary, K. M. Oswald, wrote to Ernest Marples, Minister of Housing and Local Government in January 1953 setting out a plan for how the CAB service could play a part in relation to civil defence information services. The Ministry accepted a memorandum setting out the details of the service but refused to take any steps towards helping the organization.⁵⁵ This included refusing to write a letter of commendation from the Ministry, which the CAB hoped to send to all local authorities encouraging them to take up financial support of local bureaux. One unnamed official stated, 'We can't become publicity agents for these people.'⁵⁶ The Ministry of Housing and Local Government was satisfied that local authorities were already 'well aware' of the services the Bureaux had to offer, and it must be left to the individual authorities to make use of their services.⁵⁷

In June 1954, the CAB tried again. This time the new Chairman of the service, Sir Leslie Farrer-Brown, (Secretary of the Nuffield Foundation) approached Sir Edward Playfair and Alexander Johnson, senior officials at the Treasury. They, in turn, approached Dame Evelyn Sharp, Permanent Secretary at the Ministry of Housing and Local Government to ask whether financial help might be given. A civil servant advised her that 'this government, at any rate, is not in the least likely to spend more on information services.'⁵⁸ In responding to the Treasury, Sharp stated that they were now sympathetic to a grant, if the Treasury were disposed to lift their ban on grants of this kind. She noted, 'In peace-time they are quite useful, and will perhaps be more useful soon, in explaining the provisions of the Rent Acts (and other legislation) to ordinary people.' However, no government grant was forthcoming.

⁵⁵ TNA HLG 102/320, Memo. on the CAB service, 4 March 1953,

⁵⁶ TNA HLG 102/320 Memo. by C. Grey, 11 March 1953.

⁵⁷ TNA HLG 102/320 Letter from G. W. Mosely, Permanent Secretary to Miss K. M. Oswald, 20 March 1953.

⁵⁸ TNA HLG 102/320 Handwritten memo, F. L. Edwards, 3 July 1954.

Conservatives were hostile to the notion of a centrally organized Central Office of Information (as the Ministry of Information became in 1945).⁵⁹ In 1949 the Conservative Party Chairman told the Advertising Association, 'I do not think it is a good thing for Government departments to be spending so much money on advertising.'⁶⁰ The new administration considered abolishing it and its ministerial committees on the grounds that it had served as a forum for the dissemination of political propaganda on behalf of the previous administration. On 30 November 1951, the committees were wound up on Churchill's direction. ⁶¹As a consequence of this hostility to a centralised information organ, the CAB was presented with ample opportunities for cooperation with the information and publicity staff of various government departments. Elsewhere, Conservative politicians continued to warn against the power of the state as 'grand almoner' and advocated the use of voluntary organizations as part of a mixed economy of welfare wherever possible.

On a local level, on ideological grounds, certain Labour party-led local authorities such as Coventry refused, at first, on principle to fund CAB. At the same time, many Conservative-dominated councils refused on the grounds that such a service was an unnecessary expenditure and would act as a drain on the local rates.⁶² On a local level, it is difficult to generalise about the attitudes of local Conservative groupings on local councils towards the use of the CAB as an information and advice service for the local authority. Costs seems to have featured in the decision making process as to whether to grant aid a local bureau. Sometimes the interests of the ratepayers for rates to remain low were perceived to outweigh the need for a local-authority subsidised free information and advice service. Coventry's bureau faced some hostility from the local authority, who reduced its grant in 1952. At the same time, the Chair of the local

⁵⁹ Mariel Grant, 'Towards a Central Office of Information: Continuity and Change in British Government Information Policy, 1939-51', *Journal of Contemporary History* 34/1 (1999) 49-67.

⁶⁰ *The Manchester Guardian*, 31 May 1949, 10.

⁶¹ Mariel Grant, 'Towards a Central Office of Information: Continuity and Change in British Government Information Policy, 1939-51', *Journal of Contemporary History* 34/1 (1999) 49-67, 66.

⁶² LMA AC/73/46 Box 41 East Grinstead Region 12, Letter Oswald to Eardley-Wilmot, 15 February 1951.

Trades Council (a Labour supporting councillor) visited the bureau Organizer to say that two trade unions in the city had asked him what could be done to help the bureau.

The Conservative government encouraged the continuing contribution of voluntary organizations towards the social services. An important milestone in the evolving relationship of state and voluntary organizations was the publication of the Nathan Committee's Report on the Law and Practice relating to Charitable Trusts in 1952. The Committee reported that nearly every voluntary society was experiencing financial difficulties.⁶³ It also reported that it was by and large the more modern voluntary social services, best fitted to meet current needs, which were shortest of funds and suffered most from a lack of popular appeal. The report lent further weight to the notion of a statutory-voluntary partnership and reflected pluralist and corporatist understandings of the British state, and the function of voluntary organizations in a modern democracy. Their advantages in terms of welfare provision were clearly defined: the ability to pioneer; to complement existing provisions for those people suffering from certain types of disadvantage; the ability to work from the basis of individual need, e.g. case work; to attract men and women with a high sense of dedication; to criticise state action; and to collect data and evidence with which to criticise or enhance the need for public action.

As well as recommending measures designed to put the finances of voluntary organizations on a sure footing, and thus enabling them to conduct their essential work, (such as relaxation of the *cy pres* doctrine whereby the purpose of a trust could be altered if the original purpose was no longer applicable) the report concluded that there was nothing final about the choices society had made between state action and voluntary action, but that both would expand as the common expression of the vitality of society.⁶⁴ Voluntary social service could spare time and could afford to be more labour intensive, giving individual treatment and care missing from statutory services. This extra care and time given by the citizens advice service to enquiries was made explicit in a letter from Oswald to the town clerk of Wallsend in November 1951. She

⁶³ Report of the Committee on the Law and Practice relating to Charitable Trusts (1952-3: Cmd. 8710), 13.

⁶⁴ *Ibid*, 14.

argued that the service given in bureaux could not be provided so well in any other way. So often the inquirer did not know precisely what kind of help to ask for or to which department or voluntary organization to go:

The individual enquirer might, knowing of one service which he feels is what he wants, he will not ask for some other form of assistance whose existence is not widely known. The kind of help he needs can only be discovered if the interviewer has a good deal of time to give and a wide knowledge of both statutory and voluntary services.⁶⁵

Some local authorities remained unconvinced of the need for an information and advice service. In Godalming, Surrey, the local council voted to close the bureau in 1953 following the retirement of the paid organizer (a retired, trained social worker). The Secretary of the National CAB, K. M. Oswald, was angered by the manner in which a decision had been reached and argued that the discussion by the Conservative-led council was 'merely one of those completely uninformed ones that so often sway a local authority's decision in a matter of this kind.' In the case of Godalming, the local authority felt that existing government departments, such as the local national insurance office, could answer requests for information from individuals. Oswald disputed this, arguing that this decision was only rational if a number of unsafe assumptions were made:

[...] if all the departments were locally represented; if many of the humble people who come to a bureau were able always to put their request in a way that it could be understood; if when they got to the department they were inevitably dealt with by a senior official and not normally by some quite junior one or a counter clerk.⁶⁶

'This, of course,' Oswald continued, 'leaves entirely out of account the question of advice on problems which makes up the most important work of a bureau.'⁶⁷ Oswald visited Godalming to discuss the matter with the town clerk, a solicitor. She warned the clerk against assuming that the local clergy or 'anyone else who could not give time to specialise' could hope to know all there was to know about the current social

⁶⁵ LMA AC 73/46/63 Wallsend, Letter from K. M. Oswald to C. H. Bradbury, Town Clerk, 12 November 1951.

⁶⁶ LMA AC 73/46/43 Godalming, Letter from Oswald to Mr. Garrard, 10 February 1953.

⁶⁷ Ibid.

services and welfare legislation.⁶⁸ Oswald's attempt to persuade the local council seems to have worked. The clerk agreed to consider the resurrection of the bureau on a voluntary basis, with no cost to the council other than the provision of premises, lighting, and heating, and twenty pounds for out of pocket expenses.

Bureaux organizers still looked for certain qualities in volunteers. Visitors to Bognor in 1952 reported the presence of one voluntary worker - a man in his early thirties, 'might be a university man', 'a perfect type for CAB work, as his attitude towards people and their problems was intelligent and sympathetic.'⁶⁹ A idealized CAB volunteer as presented in the fictionalised account of life in a bureaux, written by Phyllis Fletcher, was Mrs Boyes: 'the perfect voluntary worker. Her humour, her passion for punctuality and her gift of sympathetic penetration were among the Bureau's most valuable assets.'⁷⁰ Another was Mr Powcher, 'Never impatient or flustered, this retired stockbroker with the loud check suit, big moustache and deep voice ploughed through a morass of invectives with the judgment of Solomon, and listened to outpourings with the patience of a saint.'⁷¹

A sense of heroism is also present in the warnings given by the leader of the bureau to a young social studies student, engaged in practical work experience in the bureaux and considering whether to engage in social work as a career.

You'll find you'll be too tired when you've finished work to want to go out in the evenings. And gradually you'll mix more and more with those who have similar interests and leisure as yourself, the majority of whom will be women. You'll swim along in an underworld that binds and absorbs, and by the time you come up to breathe your boy-friends will have married someone else. Life gets sucked out of social workers quicker than most; and men don't like dehydrates for wives.⁷²

[...]

⁶⁸ LMA AC 73/46/43 Godalming, Note, unauthored 18 June 1953.

⁶⁹ LMA AC 73/46/34 Bognor, Report from Forde and H. Eardley-Wilmott to K. M. Oswald, 22 February 1952.

⁷⁰ Phillida Fletcher, *The Owl at Your Service* (London: Ernest Benn, 1955), 30.

⁷¹ Ibid, 63.

⁷² Ibid, 47.

Youth is often more of a deterrent than an advantage in those wishing to take up social work, [...] And it must be admitted that there is a tendency to irresponsibility in the post-war undergraduate that makes it inadvisable for those under twenty-five to embark on this exacting work. Those below this age are also apt to use their initiative in wrong directions, which in welfare can lead to serious results.⁷³

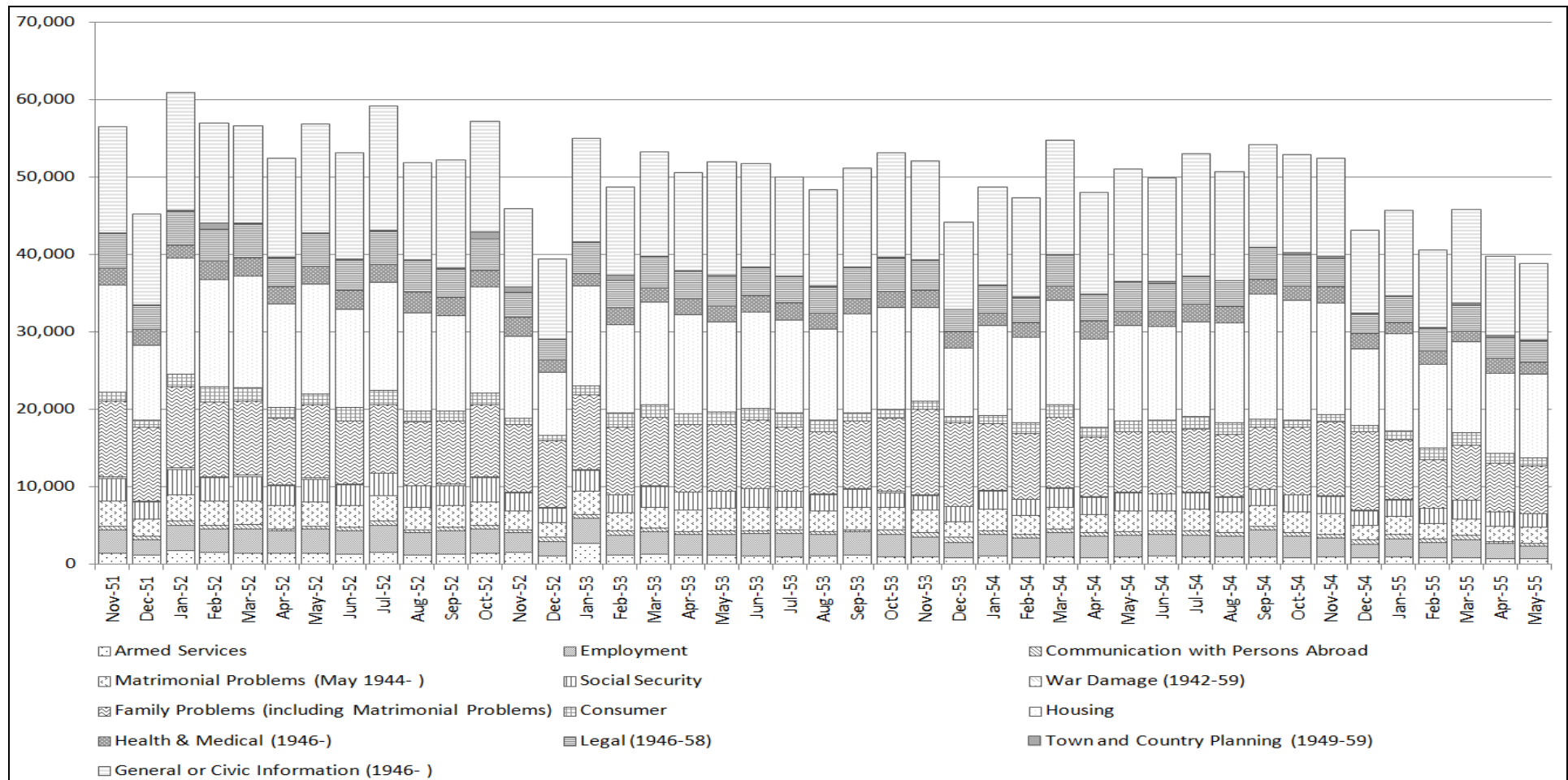
⁷³ Ibid, 48.

5.5. Outcomes

From Figure 4 it is clear that the CAB continued to provide advice on a range of issues and problems. The biggest requests for information and advice were still in the area of general civil information, family problems, housing and consumer problems. The CAB continued to act as a focal point in political discussion over the rights and responsibilities of citizenship. Through its volunteers, CAB played host to varying conceptions of the good citizen. These conceptions are evident in the different ways in which volunteers included people through education in their social and legal rights. In very rare cases, volunteers sought to police the boundaries of citizenship, though these were the exception. In some cases, volunteers served to protect the rights of the middle classes which in some cases were perceived as being under threat thanks to the perceived social revolution that had transformed British society since the war.

The CAB also acted as a vehicle for political change, campaigning for a more comprehensive scheme of legal aid and advice. Behind these campaigns seem to have been the belief that providing legal advice was an important means of stopping people from approaching the court and, instead, encouraging mediation. Criticisms of the provisions for legal aid and legal advice found an outlet in a memorandum to the Select Committee on Estimates in 1955. The CAB committee criticised the high contribution required from some applicants for assistance. Second, in order to apply for a certificate of civil legal aid, it was necessary to establish a *prima facie* case. The cost of doing so was prohibitive. Another need highlighted was that for assistance with negotiation to avoid litigation. Fourth, the CAB pointed out that by acting in partnership with the legal aid system CAB could provide social advice where it was needed and thus help to prevent the recourse to legal action when other alternatives existed. The CAB pushed for the extension of legal aid in the county courts, magistrates' courts, and for a more comprehensive scheme of provision of legal advice. They regarded this last point as urgent.

Figure 4 Number and proportion of enquiries, November 1951 to May 1955¹



¹ LMA AC 73/46/66; 67; 68; 69; 70; Statistical Abstracts, 1942-59.

Another important outcome of CAB work was the continuing campaign work of a more general nature. It was particularly well placed to deal with general and specific needs that arose from time to time, both on a local and a national level:

For instance, at local level the CAB may become aware of the need for some special provision for a particular section of the community – the old, the young, foreign workers etc and may recommend local action to meet it; or it may be thought that, if enquiries in their area are reflected in other parts of the country, there may be need for a national remedy (as in the case of the call-up of Z reservists, many of whom suffered a sharper decline in income and had heavy commitments which they could not meet in the absence of any scheme for service grants.”¹

Perhaps the most important outcome of the CAB's work in the early 1950s was the demonstration of the continuing partnership between the statutory and voluntary social services. There is no clearer example of this than in the response to the North Sea floods of the night of 31 January 1953. This terrible disaster provided another important opportunity for voluntary organizations to exercise their 'first aid' function in a time of emergency. Over 1,600 km of coastline was damaged, the flooding forced 30,000 people to be evacuated from their homes and 24,000 properties were seriously damaged. Thirty-eight people died at Felixstowe, Suffolk when wooden prefabricated homes were flooded. In Essex, on Canvey Island fifty-eight people were killed and another thirty-seven died in the village of Jaywick near Clacton. The initial CAB headquarters' response was to send a combined team of experienced CAB workers from bureaux in Yorkshire, Lancashire, Birmingham and London to strengthen existing bureaux at Louth and Alford, where refugees from the floods were settled. London had its own problems and help was sent to West Ham under the aegis of the Canning Town Women's Settlement. Staff in the affected areas answered questions about ration books, drying machines, and lost livestock. This work, organizers argued, enabled government officials to get on with the work only they could do. In addition, six emergency bureaux were set up (some, such as Mablethorpe, at the request of the local

¹ LMA 73/46/63 Wallsend, Letter from K. M. Oswald to C. H. Bradbury, Town Clerk, 12 November 1951.

authority) in Lowestoft, Felixstowe, Whitstable, Mablethorpe, Sutton and Canvey Island.

In the early weeks, bureaux were concerned with 'first aid' information with ensuring that people were aware of the services that were provided for them – not only financial but in kind; how to get their houses dry, who would help to get their carpets cleaned how to replace lost spectacles and claim lodging allowances for those in billets. As in the Blitz, the CAB saw part of its job as dispelling myths and rumours. The situation was, Oswald argued to Whitehall officials, similar to those produced by enemy attacks in the war and it gave a most useful illustration of the part that the CAB would have to play in providing advice and information in such a crisis.² This was all the more important given that in a number of cases, people had already sold their houses or their furniture for 'an old song' to dealers quick to take advantage of the situation. Another important resource that volunteers for the CAB had and which was tested on many occasions was time. Writing with regard to Essex, a historian of the floods commented, 'the topographical clues given by some enquirers meant nothing to mainland volunteers manning the Benfleet telephones ("they lived in the first bungalow in the road past the green church").'³

The CAB painted its own role in terms of relieving the statutory authorities of some of the burden of its workload, thus allowing them to progress with more important work. As the pamphlet printed by the CAB in the aftermath of the disaster put it: 'The sanitary engineer ceased to be pestered for ration books and the police for free coal. Busy people need no longer feel brutal for refusing to stop and discuss drying machines or lost chickens.'⁴ Again, the importance of the personal over the written answer was stressed, particularly in times of emergency such as this.

As the weeks went by, and people's homes and possessions remained to be assessed, their confidence in authority began to waver, argued the CAB. Grievances were dealt

² TNA HLG 102/320, Letter from K. M. Oswald to Mr E. Marples M. P., 10 January 1953.

³ Hilda E. P. Grieve, *The Great Tide: the story of the 1953 flood disaster in Essex* (London: Council Council of Essex, 1959), 607.

⁴ National Council of Social Service, *CAB in an Emergency* (London: National Council of Social Service, 1954).

with by 'sympathetic hearing, counselling, reassuring, explaining...'. As late as mid April, one bureau still received over 500 flood-related enquiries a week.⁵ Bureaux continued to deal with long-term problems relating to the flood for many months after, for example, the man of sixty five due to retire who had lost his wife and grandson, who he had brought up. The waiter at the seaside hotel who had no work since the floods and to whose normal standards of living unemployment benefit bore no relation. People with these and other problems, it was argued, needed skilled help for many weeks to come.

Bureaux workers, in addition, worked on local Flood Distress Committees, distributing financial aid, reconciling generosity with equity in their treatment of widely different types and sizes of claim and in looking into cases where unreasonable delay or accidental injustice seemed to have occurred. As with the Blitz, communities were shocked and needed kindly answers from someone anxious to help. Significantly, the authors also noted that it was in these emergency circumstances that confidence in authority began to waiver. Voluntary organizations argued that CAB helped the man in the street by telling him where to go for what he needed, interpreted rules, regulations and form, and helped with apparently minor issues which were important to individuals such as missing lobster pots. CAB volunteers, in combination with the FWA also helped to disburse emergency grants of up to twenty-five pounds from the relief fund for anyone the crisis had left penniless. Unlike during the War, the National Assistance Board had no specific powers to make grants outside the usual scales to meet circumstances arising from the flood disaster.

Early in March 1953, it was decided that the Lord Mayor's National Flood and Tempest Distress Fund would pay up to £150 per household for the loss of uninsured furniture and clothing, together with the full cost of restoring damaged houses - the values to be determined free of charge by War Damage Commission assessors. Sir Malcolm Eve, Chairman of the War Damage Commission and the Committee of the Lord Mayors Fund, on seeing the extent of the work encouraged George Haynes of the National

⁵ Lord Mayor of London's National Flood and Tempest Distress Fund, *The Sea Came In: The history of the Lord Mayor of London's National Flood & Tempest Distress Fund* (London: The Lord Mayor of London, 1959), 25.

Council of Social Service to approach the five affected County Councils for grant aid. Haynes agreed and also set out his intention to approach the Ministry of Health. The Ministry responded negatively, arguing that they were helping public authorities to the maximum, 'in work which (by a wide stretch of the imagination) could be regarded as public duty.' The Ministry were expecting the Lord Mayor's Fund to deal with the welfare and sickness of private individuals and that, the CAB should look to it for any financial assistance.⁶

The secretariat of the Lord Mayor's Fund, in particular, relied heavily on CAB to investigate difficult or doubtful cases referred to them. Individual Bureaux delivered feedback to the Mansion House committee of the Fund. Occasionally, poorly trained volunteers attempted to sift claimants into 'deserving' and 'undeserving' categories. As one CAB worker was quoted: 'Could these tumbledown shacks by the seas really represent an important source of income from summer lettings?' On the whole, CAB work was incredibly constructive and useful to individuals. As one CAB worker asked: 'Would payment in the form of vouchers on shops ensure that compensation was properly spent, or would it merely exasperate the recipients?' The CAB's report on its work during the floods included the remarks of one client. Allegedly he came in to a bureau angry and exclaimed: 'How I hate these officials [...] They push people into categories and then treat them as if they were all alike, instead of separate human beings. Nobody will understand my case.' Upon being helped, he claimed, 'thank you [...] I felt like a pauper asking for charity at first, but later on I did not mind. I suppose that was the result of talking to you.'⁷

CAB work in the early 1950s was extremely important in reducing social and economic inequality among older people. Evidence of increasing concern with the social problems of older people can be traced in the records of individual bureaux. In 1953, Southwark CAB, south London, conducted a survey of the social problems facing the over 60s. Bureau staff were asked for help filling in forms; information on obtaining the savings of a deceased wife; information on how to get into an old people's home;

⁶ TNA HLG 102/320 Lord Mayors fund and extension of CAB service for flood damage, note by Mr Symon, 12 March 1953.

⁷ National Council of Social Service, *CAB in an Emergency* (London: National Council of Social Service, 1954).

difficulties over pensions, including writing letters of appeal to the Ministry of National Insurance regarding overpayment requests; war damage compensation; obtaining birth certificates; obtaining home help; and advice on tenancy agreements. The report found that, of the high number of personal problems brought to this bureau, a large number consisted of requests for counter signatures on official forms, and enquiries about how to make a will and how to trace missing relatives. The report also highlighted what it called the 'accident proneness' of ageing and older people, which was reflected in the numbers seeking advice on how to claim compensation for street accidents and needing referral to legal advisers. Finally, it was found that national insurance claims made up a high percentage of enquiries from older people, particularly enquiries regarding state pensions, income tax and post-war credit claims. The CAB also found accommodation for those who had lost contact with relatives, and those who found hostel life lonely seeking some company.⁸

⁸ LMA AC 73/46/8 CAB Committee 1952-7, Report by Southwark CAB on Some Problems for over 60s, 1953.

5.6. Conclusion

The Annual Report of the National Council of Social Service of 1951-2 argued that the need for voluntary work was greater than ever before.⁹ Meanwhile, many other organizations commented on the growth of opportunities for voluntary work in a welfare society. Yet, despite the apparent increase in demand for voluntary social services, a residual sense of anxiety and uncertainty is discernible in the internal discussions of voluntary organizations such as the CAB. As a provider of welfare services alongside the state, the CAB headquarters was desperately in need of financial resources in order to carry out its role of supervising and coordinating the bureaux situated across the country. Any negativity expressed by the CAB tended to be at the highest level of the organization, which felt that its federal role as organizer and enforcer was being undermined by the lack of resources and paid staff. Even with reduced resources, local CAB continued to adapt themselves to the new problems of the post-war world.

In 1952, *The Economist* asked in an article titled 'Bureaux against Bureaucracy', why the CAB continued to be popular. It was because, the article argued, the welfare state created a deeply distrustful attitude on the part of ordinary men and women:

Nor is everything plain sailing when the right office has been approached and the right form filled in. Big organizations made plenty of individual mistakes, however beneficent their general policy. Not all the clerks who deal directly with the public are the right sort of people for the job, and the difficulties of selection and training are little consolation to the timid caller whose story is rambling; the caller with a grievance whose dates are vague; the perfect paragon of callers faced with a liverish jack-in-office. All alike suffer a sense of outrage when the almighty state says "No" and they are convinced it should have said "Yes".¹⁰

The point is not to paper over the weaknesses and shortcomings of the CAB, for there is little doubt that these remained. For example, individual Bureaux were affected by a shortage of volunteers and finance. But, crucially, this shortage was felt in the context

⁹ National Council of Social Service, *Annual Report 1950/51* (London: National Council of Social Service, 1951), 13.

¹⁰ *The Economist*, 30 August 1952, 487.

of increased opportunities for voluntary action presented by the expansion of the welfare state. Rather than feeling crowded out by the state, the CAB felt inadequate in the light of the perceived need for modernisation and rising standards in public welfare. In the context of rising levels of public spending on social services, voluntary organizations felt their inadequacies. There was no absolute decline in amounts of funding or charitable giving. Rather the sources of finance changed. Local appeals for funds were not as successful as before in all cases, but this seems to have related to the kind of work the CAB offered, information and advice rather than material assistance.

Despite these challenging conditions, the CAB continued to provide an important welfare service and provided a political vehicle for men and women concerned with social justice and humanitarian issues. The CAB was able to continue and adapt itself as a provider of social services; as an agent of political change through consultation with government; as a vehicle for the expression of the values and interests of its volunteers; and as a site for the constitution and political socialisation of, by and large, the middle classes. It was able to do this because of the continuing demand for its services. Also, institutional and environmental factors were conducive to continued rhetorical and practical support for voluntary organizations such as the CAB (including local financial support). Moreover people continued to offer their professional services for free in pursuit of the aims of the CAB.

6. Consolidation, 1955-59

6.1. Introduction

The previous chapter explored how the CAB wrestled with the problems of financial stringency to establish itself as a permanent feature of the post war social services. By the mid to late 1950s, the CAB had successfully established itself as part of the normal pattern of Britain's social services. This chapter charts the continuing development and adaptation of the CAB to its changing socio-economic environment as well as charting the influence of the gradual rise of affluence on its work, aims, structure and organization.

This chapter is concerned with exploring how and why the CAB could continue offering its services alongside the welfare state. It considers how the goals of the organization shifted to take into account the growing demand for information and advice. Perhaps the most important development of the period was the rise in affluence. This chapter considers whether this led to a decline in social problems or a decline in the need for information and advice, or created new needs. If so, did the CAB adapt to tackling the changing social problems of the day? How did affluence affect the finances, structure, and volunteers of the CAB? Did its relationship with the Conservative governments of Eden and Macmillan change to reflect government attempts to create an 'opportunity state' that cut welfare expenditure and increased individual incentives? What were the outcomes of CAB work, for the volunteers and for British society in the 1950s more widely?

Historians of the 1950s have explored the history of the period through the prism of affluence and its effect on British political culture. In 1958, John Kenneth Gailbraith coined the term 'private affluence with public squalor'. Lawrence Black and Hugh Pemberton have both considered the impact of affluence on political culture. Examinations of the progressive forces in British politics at this time have tended to stress the importance of non-party politics at the expense of party. Lawrence Black has

stressed the ambivalence towards affluence displayed by Labour.¹ Pemberton and Black have also considered political representations of affluence.²

Equally relevant is the re-emergence of free market and 'Marxian' ideas and the impact these ideas had on unpaid voluntary service managed by well-meaning middle-class reformers. The Conservatives, in particular, assumed that the market was in almost all cases the most efficient mechanism for matching demand and supply. Common citizenship was also best expressed not through duties and rights embodied in the state but through the free association of people in the market, in charitable activity and in everyday social life. National efficiency and the maximization of welfare were dependent on individual and not collective initiative.³ For the New Left, particularly after 1956, volunteering, it was argued, was part of the same political structures which barred broad aspects of social aspiration.⁴ Meanwhile Brian Abel-Smith wrote in 1958 of the long tradition of personal authoritarianism behind the voluntary charity movement.⁵

These questions are addressed through a close examination of the expansion of CAB work into tackling consumer problems, particularly relating to hire purchase and house purchase. It explores the role of the CAB in handling housing problems, particularly, the operation of the 1957 Rent Act. It also explores CAB work in the area of race relations given concern in sections of the community with the growth in immigration. It also examines the questions surrounding the expansion of the CAB information and advice service into rural areas as part of an experiment funded by the Carnegie Trust in the United Kingdom.

¹ Lawrence Black, *The Political Culture of the Left in Britain, 1951-64: Old Labour, New Britain?* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2003).

² Lawrence Black, 'The Impression of Affluence: Political Culture in the 1950s and 1960s', in Lawrence Black and Hugh Pemberton (eds.) *An Affluent Society? Britain's Post-war 'Golden Age' Revisited* (Farnham: Ashgate, 2003), 85-106.

³ Paul Bridgen and Rodney Lowe, *Welfare Policy under the Conservatives 1951-1964* (London: Public Record Office, (1998), 9.

⁴ See E.P. Thompson 'Outside the Whale', in E. P. Thompson ed., *Out of Apathy*(London: Stevens & Sons Limited, 1960), 141-194.

⁵ Brian Abel-Smith, 'Whose Welfare State', in Norman Mackenzie ed., *Conviction* (London: MacGibbon & Keen, 1958), 70.

By addressing these areas, this chapter shows how the CAB continued to adapt its role alongside the welfare state. As well as continuing its traditional role of providing information and advice on all aspects of social problems, it specialized in certain areas, namely housing, personal relationships and other consumer advice. These questions are of historical importance because they show the continuing adaptation of voluntary organizations to the changing role of the state. The 1950s were not simply a period of marking time, or of decline, for voluntary organizations. Instead, it was a period of continuing relevance and importance for voluntary organizations. Through a continuing commitment to piecemeal and pragmatic reform, voluntary organizations such as the CAB acted as a force for social progress. Although to later generations, the work of the CAB appeared ideologically muted perhaps, this was in keeping with the relatively muted political culture of the times which, excluding the rise of the CND, favored a consensual approach to change.

6.2. Aims and Goals

The goal of the CAB remained to inform people of their rights and responsibilities and to give recommendations and opinions on suitable courses of action. This work was carried out in new contexts and new areas, reflecting the continuing growth in the number of large-scale organizations and complexity in wider society. This period saw an increasing range and diversity of questions coming to bureaux. The CAB aimed to deal with personal problems, including family budgeting and hire purchase and problems relating to life in the new towns, to interpret legislation and to create informed citizens. Behind this lay the broader ideological aim of creating responsible citizens. CAB imagined the individual citizen in the welfare state as a partner in a plan that imposed obligations. The goal of informing, advising and educating citizens was influenced by the widely held, socially democratic, CAB belief 'that it is the right of people, however humble, to understand what is being done to them or for them.'⁶

The goal of the CAB therefore remained to communicate knowledge about political, social and legal rights to individuals in need of assistance. As well as providing information and explanations, CAB advisers still aimed to provide skilled advice in the form of recommendations and opinions on suitable courses of action for individual citizens. The work of the CAB continued to highlight the difficulties experienced by the inexperienced and less educated in understanding the written word, whether in a government form or a memorandum. The CAB headquarters described people leaving the armed forces being presented with printed material concerning their rights to National Insurance. They argued that many demobilized soldiers had no place in their homes to keep papers of this kind, and 'whether or not they might have been understood when read, in many cases they are lost by the time they are needed.' This was the point at which most enquiries came to the CAB.⁷

As social worker and commentator Una Cormack argued in 1955, the citizen in the welfare state was preeminently a partner in a plan which imposed obligations. The CAB, as the most widespread of all non specialist family case work agencies which

⁶ TNA HLG 102/390 Notes on Co-operation between the CAB and General Govt Departments, unauthored, undated.

⁷ TNA HLG 102/390 Notes on Co-operation between the CAB and General Govt Departments, unauthored, undated.

combated the fragmentation of the British social Services, was best placed to educate citizens in those obligations. It substituted the personal relationship for mass regulation and helped citizens as consumers of social services. At the same time, Cormack admitted that it was not equipped to use social science methods. Instead it offered friendliness, and the capacity to recognize where intensive case work was required. She argued that the general scientific accounts of people held by social scientists were overly focused on the individual as an object and not as a subject and suggested certain weaknesses in social science methods. The job of the CAB therefore, as before, was not to judge enquirers but to serve them by pointing out the consequences of various actions, to mediate for them, to pave their way, but to leave it to the individual to make decisions.⁸

The determination to respect and maintain the dignity of the individual was in principle and in practice common to most approaches to social work in this decade and to the growing science of human relations more broadly. The individual, it was suggested by social workers, and the CAB, was under threat from a rising tide of unregulated affluence, and the growing mass of legislation that made up the welfare state. For social scientists advocating the importance of human relationships to maintaining the welfare state, the CAB offered an important antidote to the growing complexity of statutory welfare services and other legislation. The CAB continued to operate against a background of general suspicion about expert advice. Suspicion of the expert had not died away. Iris Murdoch wrote in 1958: 'We cannot live without "the experts" [...] but the true open society in the modern world is one in which expertise is not mysterious.'⁹

An important area of education and information work related to home building and budgeting. Mrs Bonhomme, the left-leaning organizer of the bureau in Coventry, designed and ran courses on home budgeting for newly married young couples. These courses were popular and well attended, though those attending tended to be middle

⁸ National Committee of Citizens' Advice Bureaux, *Principles of Social Work* (London: National Council of Social Service, 1955).

⁹ Iris Murdoch, 'A house of theory', in N. Mackenzie, *Conviction 1958* cited in Stefan Collini, *Absent Minds: Intellectuals in Britain* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2006), 162-3.

class. In 1957, advice on home budgeting was printed for distribution to Anglo-Egyptian refugees forced to flee by the Suez Crises. The pamphlet demonstrated a typical family budget, listed some welfare services provided by the state and those provided by voluntary organizations, listed some essential furniture and provided advice on the advantages and disadvantages of hire purchase and credit buying.¹⁰ The desire to provide homebuilding advice was partly driven by headquarters. Spurring them on was a shared view that poor education in family budgeting and homemaking lead to social problems shattering the unit of the family., An important area of CAB work relating to family problems was that relating to the 'traditional' social worker's concern with family budgeting and its relationship with the growing practice of Hire Purchase. This was also demonstrated through a continuing concern with the quality of human relationships, reflecting the changing nature of social casework – where the worker tried to help the individual, or family, by attempting to repair personal relationships. The CAB hoped to detach general advice work from specialist casework. This was difficult and the two continued to exist side by side.

The CAB also continued to explain complicated government legislation to individuals. Perhaps the most important example of legislation needing interpreting and explaining in the mid to late 1950s were the 1957 Rent Act and the 1958 Landlord and Tenant Temporary Provisions Act. The Rent Act was passed by the Conservative government against a background of political turmoil and international tension due to the Suez crisis of November 1956. A highly contentious piece of legislation, the Act was designed to resolve the problem of the huge housing shortages in Britain, especially London, by removing the statutory restrictions on the rents of privately let accommodation which had operated since the First World War. The Conservative government argued that by abolishing rent controls, private landlords would be encouraged to maintain, improve, and invest in private rented property and thereby increase its availability.¹¹ However, a number of political, social and administrative

¹⁰ National Citizens Advice Bureaux Committee, *Housekeeping on £8 per Week* (London: National Council of Social Service, 1957).

¹¹ Property with rateable values exceeding £40 were decontrolled. For those remaining controlled, the "standard rent" was replaced with a new "rent limit" which was calculated by multiplying the 1956 Gross Value by a factor determined according to the repairing liabilities of the parties. For instance, where the landlord was responsible for

constraints ensured that the aims of the Act were never achieved.¹² Added to this was the greed of certain landlords combined with the housing shortages. As well as failing to achieve its objective of increasing the supply of rented housing, a number of perverse outcomes quickly emerged. These were well documented by the CAB, particularly in London, where thousands of anxious tenants flooded to their offices to ask for information on the new legislation. The new system led to the decontrol of rent on certain high value properties while retaining it on lower valued properties. This increased the incentives for families to stay in controlled housing, albeit in overcrowded conditions, rather than move to larger uncontrolled premises. The supply of rented housing failed to expand, while the incentives for landlords to sell rent-controlled property for owner-occupation continued. But the problems did not end there. Because the act decontrolled properties on a change of tenancy, landlords were offered a financial advantage from forcing a controlled tenant to leave. In the process, the legislative obligations on landlords to keep their property in proper repair, to provide rent books, and sign tenancy agreements were effectively nullified giving greater opportunities for landlords to force tenants to leave through a variety of unscrupulous methods and tactics, including intimidation. Peter Rachman, landlord in Notting Hill, London was perhaps the most notorious example of landlord exploiting tenants.¹³

Between July 1957, when the Act became law, and the end of August forty-two bureaux in London dealt with over 25,000 enquiries from landlords and tenants about the legislation. Meanwhile, a further seventy-nine provincial bureaux dealt with approximately 30,000 enquiries. Many bureaux reported a stream of callers from 9.30am till 6pm. The queries came from anxious tenants in controlled houses, tenants in

all repairs and external decoration, (the tenant being responsible for internal decoration only) the 1956 Gross Value would be multiplied by two to produce the annual rent limit. Other multipliers were to be used for different repairing and decorating liabilities. No new tenancies were to be subject to control, whatever the rateable value of the premises, unless granted to a tenant who was immediately before its creation a controlled tenant of the same premises or premises which included them.

¹² Details of these constraints can be seen in Malcolm Barnett *The Politics of Legislation: The Rent Act 1957* (LSEPS, Widenfeld and Nicolson: London, 1969). Reveals a breakdown in the application of knowledge to policy making.

¹³ For more see Alan G. V. Simmonds, 'Raising Rachman: The Origins of the Rent Act, 1957', *The Historical Journal* 45/4 (2002), 843-68.

houses recently released from control, landlords and old people. CAB, as well as advising tenants on what course of action to take if threatened by eviction, and, in some cases referring them for legal advice, sought to educate the public letters to local newspapers warning of the dangers for people with controlled rent agreements ending their agreements. The national headquarters of the CAB was concerned to portray itself as an impartial source of social and legal advice, so little attempt was made to assess the general reaction to the Act for fear of the potential political implications. (Instead, the headquarters of the CAB recorded cases of action by landlords charging extortionate amounts for drawing up new rent agreements, and demands for rent increases on property in slum clearance areas and presented the facts to the government). On the other hand, there were instances of moderate and even generous landlords, some of whom asked the bureaux for advice as to what would be a 'fair' increase in rent in relation to the circumstances of the tenant, and many tenants expressed themselves satisfied with the increased rents.¹⁴ However, CAB did not shy away from criticism where it was due, pointing out that many of the prescribed forms had been difficult to get hold of in many areas, and were priced differently by different agencies. It also stated that government publicity had been severely lacking.¹⁵ The response of the CAB was measured, therefore, and did not deviate from but operated within the political culture of the time. Given this context, its contribution towards social reform was considerable. It continued to place faith in authority and to seek to influence government efforts at reform through the presentation of evidence, case studies and general trends in housing problems. This seemed to pay off and the CAB was consulted on housing problems through the 1950s and early 1960s; culminating in their use as evidence gatherers for the Milner Holland Housing Report of 1963-4.

The CAB fulfilled its aim of helping citizens to benefit from state services through its continuing work of representing the citizens as consumers of welfare. This was particularly true in connection with the work of tribunals. In 1955 a Committee of Inquiry into the constitution and working of tribunals and ministerial decisions was

¹⁴ TNA HLG 41/152, NCSS, Citizens Advice Bureaux and the Rent Act, 1957, Report submitted to the Minister of Housing and Local Government, November 1957.

¹⁵ LMA AC 73/46/8 CAB Meetings 1956-9, NCABC Report of the National Citizens' Advice Bureaux Committee for the period April 1957 to March 1959.

appointed under the chairmanship of Sir Oliver Franks, diplomat, civil servant, and moral philosopher. The report recognized the growth in tribunals and regarded them as machinery provided by Parliament for adjudication rather than as part of the machinery of administration. The Committee, set up in response to the Crichel Down affair, argued that tribunals and ministerial decisions should be guided both by characteristics of openness, fairness and impartiality.¹⁶ The Crichel Down affair had given rise to the widespread concern with the growth of tribunals and the power of the state over individuals.

It was against the rise of this 'new despotism', meaning the decline in control over powerful institutions by elected representatives, that the CAB continually sought to defend individuals in their relations with the state. In March 1956 the CAB asked individual bureaux to collect evidence for the Franks Committee.¹⁷ They asked for general observations about how the National Insurance and other tribunals within the NHS, Ministry of Labour and National Service, and Rent Tribunals etc operated and experiences of the kind of people serving on the tribunals. The "consumer" point of view was stressed in the advice to bureaux submitting evidence. Finally, the bureaux were asked to consider cases of enquiries or hearings by, or on behalf of, a Minister, especially in relation to the compulsory purchase of land. As one report appointed following the Crichel Down affair noted:

In present times the interests of the private citizen are affected to a great extent by the actions of civil servants. It is the more necessary that the civil servant should bear

¹⁶ In 1937 the 725 acres of Crichel Down were compulsorily acquired for £12,106 by the Air Ministry as a bombing range. In 1940 the owner of the land died on active service in the RAF, and the Estate passed in trust to his only child, Mary Anna Stuart, who married Commander Marten in 1949. In 1941 Winston Churchill promised in Parliament to return the land to its owners after World War II. In 1949, the Air Ministry, ceasing to use the land decided to transfer it to the Ministry of Agriculture and Fisheries which assumed control in January 1950. Instead of handing it over, the Ministry increased the cost of the land beyond the amount the original owners could afford and leased it out. The strength of the reaction in Parliament and outside as the story developed led to two reports and the resignation of the Minister for Agriculture, Sir Thomas Dugdale. See J. A. G. Griffith, 'The Crichel Down Affair', *The Modern Law Review*, 18/6 (1955), 557-570.

¹⁷ LMA AC 73 46/8/CAB Committee Papers 1952-7, NCSS, Administrative Circular No. 14, Evidence for the Committee on Administrative Tribunals. March 1956.

constantly in mind that the citizen has a right to expect, not only that his affairs will be dealt with effectively and expeditiously, but also that his personal feelings, no less than his rights as an individual, will be sympathetically and fairly considered.¹⁸

In its memorandum submitted to the Franks Committee, the CAB headquarters argued that while the majority of tribunals were working well, the arrangements for making people aware of their right to appeal were unsatisfactory. Tribunals had, after all, been set up to enable people to challenge official decisions. The decisions of tribunals were not always understood and a sense of grievance was often engendered. Despite the best efforts of the tribunals, the proceedings were immensely intimidating to some applicants. Furthermore, it was a huge hardship for some people who were not accustomed to expressing themselves in writing to have to present their case. CAB workers believed, although they helped many people, many more did not come to them and were unable to present their facts clearly and struggled to obtain a hearing before a Tribunal. The evidence of the CAB emphasized the problems of those people who, despite the official help available, did not understand their rights or the procedure which would be followed if they decided to apply to a tribunal. The CAB recommended that the opportunity for legal representation should be extended subject to the provisions of the Legal Aid and Advice Act.¹⁹

There were further detailed criticisms within the memorandum, for example in the case of National Insurance and Assistance Tribunals, CAB reported that very few people were fully aware of the right to refuse to have their case heard if there was not a full attendance at the tribunal. For the National Health Service Tribunals CAB complained that the membership of the tribunals was over-weighted on the professional side, and few members of the public understand that lay members could also be appointed. In the case of Inland Revenue tribunals there were multiple cases reported where people had no idea of the procedure they could adopt in relation to

¹⁸ *Report of a Committee appointed by the Prime Minister to consider whether certain Civil Servants should be transferred to other duties* (1954: Cmd. 9220) para 3. This is the actual title of the report.

¹⁹ *Committee on Administrative Tribunals and Enquiries, Minutes of Evidence Taken Before the Committee on Administrative Tribunals and Enquiries: Fifteenth and Sixteenth days*, (London: HMSO, 1956), Memorandum submitted by The National Citizens' Advice Bureaux Committee, 576.

PAYE, rights to reclaim tax wrongly deduced at source, and 'Notional' assessments on small taxpayers; where the right of appeal was lost if the assessment was not challenged within 21 days. Finally, with regard to administrative procedures in relation to Compulsory Acquisition, the NCAB was satisfied with the way enquiries and hearings took place, but unhappy about the way in which, after the enquiry was held, that the decision was conveyed to people, particularly the less educated. 'Bureaux are conscious that real worry and distress is caused by the apparent reluctance of local officials to explain in simple language the effect of the decision that has been arrived at.'²⁰

CAB aimed to act as the human face of the welfare state, providing publicity and local information for local government. This was an important service for the economizing of the 1950s had prevented many local authorities from setting up their own local public relations officers or teams (as had been envisaged in the late 1940s. In May 1956, Anthony Wedgwood Benn and Richard Crossman initiated a House of Commons debate on the subject of public relations. In the debate the CAB received praise from both the government and the Labour MP Sidney Irving, for their work in the field of public relations. Irving was himself chair of the CAB in Dartford, Kent. ²¹

The CAB strove to act as a referral as well as an information and advice service. As RAB Butler told the workers at the 1957 conference, workers had knowledge of the conditions of the people: 'Your bureaux are, so to speak, general practitioners, who can introduce the "patients" who come to see them to appropriate specialists where the complexity of the subject is beyond the scope and experience of the bureau. ²² In carrying out this role, bureau workers were, it was argued, able to speak the language of experts without being experts themselves. In continued to conduct this role, CAB

²⁰ Committee on Administrative Tribunals and Enquiries, Minutes of Evidence Taken Before the Committee on Administrative Tribunals and Enquiries: Fifteenth and sixteenth days, Volumes Fifteenth and Sixteenth Days, (London: HMSO, 1956), Memorandum submitted by The National Citizens' Advice Bureaux Committee, 575.

²¹ Hansard, HC (Series 5) Vol. 553, col. 1485-572 (8 June 1956).

²² Standing Conference of Citizens' Advice Bureau, Pattern for Partnership: Report of the National Standing Conference of Citizens' Advice Bureaux, May 1959 (London: National Council of Social Service, 1959), 8.

headquarters believed that its workers would bridge the gap between the lay person and the professional expert.

6.3. Structure and organization

The organizational structure of the CAB continued to undergo gradual change. Its purpose, as we have seen, continued to be providing a satisfactory service on a fair basis. It remained largely decentralized, more flexible and less hierarchical than other more bureaucratic organizations. The recognition of the importance of CAB work by the public and by governments had its counterpoint in the recognition by the headquarters of the CAB of the need to achieve a common standard of work throughout the country whilst respecting the autonomy of individual bureaux and the need to make the service more widely available, especially in country areas. There was also a perceived need to ensure the continuity of each bureau, leading to the renewal during this period of the bureau registration scheme, with its emphasis on the need for adequate organization, representative and responsible local committees: and the help of legal advisers and constitutions unique to new bureaux.²³ It was clear that some reform of the organizational structure was required. The General Secretary of the NCAB mentioned the difficulties of taking on new projects, sometimes with special funding, e.g. the Anglo-Egyptian Resettlement Board for Suez work, without strengthening the general administrative machine in general.²⁴

Technically, power still lay at the head of the organization, however this was a soft form of power, for the headquarters lacked coercive powers to bring local bureaux to heel. It was increasingly difficult to force an inadequate bureau to close down, given that much weight was placed on democracy of the organization. Publically, the CAB argued that each bureau was a local self-governing unit working in close partnership with the local authority, with the local officers of central government, departments and with other local voluntary organizations. Closely linked with the National Committee and headquarters, with NCSS, through whom were supplied background information necessary to its work. This was in the form of Citizens Advice Notes, kept up to date by periodic supplements and administrative circulars issued each month.

²³ LMA AC 73/46/8 CAB Meetings 1956-9, NCABC Report of the National Citizens' Advice Bureaux Committee for the period April 1957 to March 1959, 3-4.

²⁴ LMA AC 73/46/2 CAB/Finance/7, Letter from K. M. Oswald to A. Sanderson, The Gulbenkian Foundation, 18 February, 1959.

There was continued introspection about the structure of the organization from those at its top. During the later 1950s, the CAB was divided from time to time on its priorities. On the one hand, it was anxious to carry out the National Council's policy of securing an adequate coverage of bureaux; on the other, there were bureaux which clearly needed to be reorganized or, failing this, to be closed. At the same time there, was the question of the need for more and more training, both in the specific matters with which bureaux were required to deal and to keep bureaux workers up to date with changes and developments in social thought which might affect their attitudes if not their actual day to day work.

Meanwhile, measures were undertaken to increase the representativeness of the National CAB Committee when in 1958 a sub-committee was set up to consider its membership. One option considered by the committee was whether to allow direct representation of County CAB committees and for representatives from such bodies as the Library Association and local authority Associations. The suggestion to expand representation to County CAB Committees arose from a belief that the deliberations of the National Committee did not reach far enough down to some of the individual bureaux. It was thought that individual bureaux were not aware of the thinking at national level.²⁵ The members of the subcommittee believed that the existing National CAB Committee was insufficiently representative of individual bureaux. To combat this tendency, the Committee considered a number of suggestions for disseminating knowledge of its deliberations more widely amongst individual bureaux, including a CAB bulletin or magazine. This desire to improve channels of communication between different levels of the organization reflected concerns that the CAB was straying too far from its democratic roots. In addition, the subcommittee suggested winding up the Standing Conference of CAB, and the establishment of a National Council for CAB, to meet not more than twice a year, with a membership of 40. Its function would be to provide for the pooling of experience and of views on matters on which decisions would subsequently be taken by an Executive Committee.

²⁵ LMA AC 73/46/8 CAB Meetings 1956-9, National CAB Committee, Paper 4, Report of Sub-committee to consider membership of National CAB Committee, 17 June 1958.

In terms of coverage, the number of bureaux remained steady at around 450. There was a slow but steady leakage of bureaux which closed due to apathy, or the loss of a key member of staff, but at the same time new bureaux opened, which were often of a better quality than those they replaced. In 1955 the Carnegie United Kingdom Trust financed an experimental scheme to provide CAB services in rural areas with the help of seven county organizations. The conclusion was reached that people in small places preferred to go to bureaux in larger towns where they could remain anonymous, even if this meant travelling. One county had success with its mobile CAB – a caravan which was parked on market days in a small town. They could regulate enquiries by the amount of publicity given through posters, the press, and exhibition talks on CAB work.²⁶

In the countryside CAB headquarters made efforts to spread knowledge of the service of the central bureau by close liaison with the 'traditional advisers' in the villages – the clergy, doctors, district nurses, and schoolteachers. Information gathered by headquarters showed that the number of enquiries from rural areas had increased. One county saw a fivefold increase from 1957 to 1962. Problems of those in the country were similar to those from the towns. Almost many had a rural slant: e.g. difficulties in getting small children to school in a very rural district, a sudden emergency caused through the only milkman in a village with several small children stopping deliveries, disputes affecting common lands. In addition to this scheme, several experimental bureaux were set up in rural areas outside of the scheme. National headquarters published an especially designed quarterly Bulletin of Information. This experiment revealed that the needs of country people for information and advice were as great as those of townspeople.²⁷

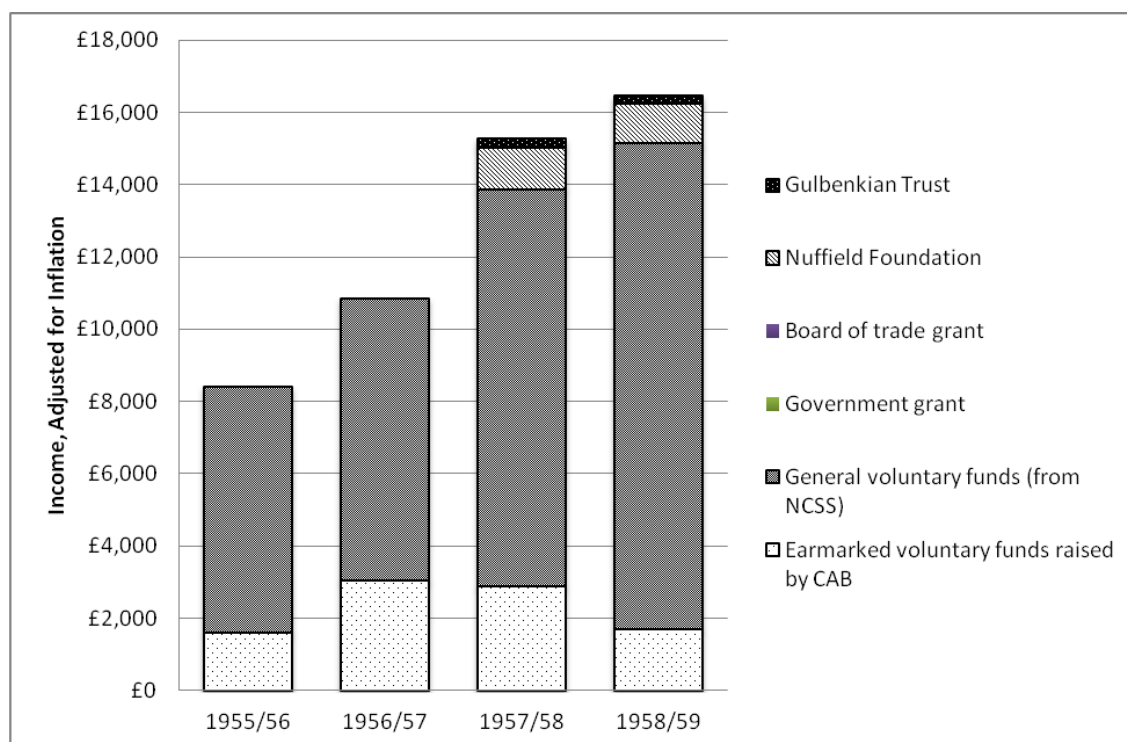
These and other organizational reforms were heavily influenced by the slowly increasing financial resources available to the organization. Financially, the situation gradually began to improve for the CAB during these years. As can be seen from Figure 1, the finances of the CAB headquarters continued to vary. The newly created Calouste Gulbenkian Trust made a grant of £250 a year for three years to assist

²⁶ LMA AC 73/46/13 Publicity 1942-1959 CAB Ctte/5 Public Relations Subcommittee

²⁷ LMA 4016/IS/A/01/033(3) Executive Committee Minutes, Report of departments and associated groups, 10 October 1957, 4

attendance at training and refresher courses of the voluntary workers. In 1957 the Nuffield Trust made a grant to assist the CAB's work.

Figure 5 CAB Headquarters' Income (Adjusted for Inflation) 1955-59



Local authorities continued to grant aid large numbers of bureaux, though amounts continued to vary. Overall, there was an increase. The wealthier bureaux included Brighton (£2,500 grant plus help with the local rates), Southampton (£1,000 plus help in kind), Croydon (£1,425 plus premises for one sub-office) and Lewisham (£2,666). Grants to London bureaux run by the London Council of Social Service from local authorities in 1957 showed an increase of £916.10.10d on the previous year, the total being £23,554.10.0d.²⁹ Farrer Brown, chair of the National Committee noted in an article in the *Municipal Journal* of 13 Jan 1956, that of 450 bureaux, four fifths received support from local authorities, ranging from £2,000 to £3,000 a year in some large towns, where full time professional workers were employed, to £15-25 for small premises staffed by trained volunteers.

²⁹ LMA 4016/IS/A/01/033(3) Executive Committee Minutes, Report of departments and associated groups, 10 October 1957, 8.

In terms of the makeup of the volunteers, a survey of 70 volunteers working between 1955 and 1959 reveals their continuing diversity.³¹ Of those surveyed, just under two thirds were women. The chairs of bureaux committees were usually men. Women tended to fulfill the roles of bureau organizers and workers. The majority of secretaries and workers were married and there were still multiple instances of husbands and wives working alongside one another, for example in the Trowbridge bureau, Wiltshire. The occupations of the other voluntary workers according to the survey included: three social work students, local councillors, a National Assistance Board worker who had left her job on marriage, headmasters and headmistresses, employment officers, a retired accountant, a solicitor's secretary, a hospital deputy matron, a retired social worker, a probation officer, almoners, housing managers, a former Bank of England employee, retired civil servants and a librarian.

An example of a new organizer starting during this period was Ernest Smith, vice-chair of Mill Hill and district football boy's league. In 1958 he began working at the Burnley CAB. He was the former secretary of the Blackburn YMCA, the Blackburn Deanery Sunday School Association and a Congregationalist lay preacher. Smith was also the author of a number of books on religious, social, and psychological subjects. Other new recruits included young women with children. In one bureau, the organizer was a recently married woman aged 28. Some concern was expressed by headquarters that she would be unable to return to work if she started a family. However, Joan Pridham, the assistant secretary of the National CAB argued in her defense that young women often returned to voluntary work once their children were old enough³².

In terms of its organizational values, the CAB strove to maintain respect for authority at all times. In 1955, GH Banwell told workers gathered at a national conference that there should always be a bias towards authority in CAB work, because the powers exercised by authority had the support and consent of the majority of the people.³³ The CAB should not start by assuming that authority was usually or always wrong. No

³¹ Survey conducted on random sample of 70 volunteers from across England by author.

³² LMA AC 73/46/34/Region 10 Burnley, 1939-59.

³³ National Council of Social Service, *The Principles of Social Work* (London: National Council of Social Service, 1955).

service would be rendered to people if the impression was given that the CAB were always 'against the government.'³⁴ The CAB leadership continued to uphold its faith in British democracy, and to place its trust in the benevolence of those who governed Britain and ran its public services. Yet, alongside such bias towards authority, Banwell advised that humans were fallible and that the decisions of authority could be applied to the individual only through individuals, who were likely to make mistakes from time to time: 'particularly in behavior – the official who had been unsympathetic or hard or too rigid in the application of good principles; the applicant who had been arrogant or abusive or so conscious of his rights in relation to the community as a whole that he completely overlooked his obligations.'³⁵

Alongside a general respect for authority, the CAB still strove for greater professionalism. Within the organization, there was a continuing emphasis on the CAB's traditional values of impartiality, fairness and openness. These mirrored the continuing attempts of the social work profession to depoliticize itself in its bid to gain professional status in the eyes of governments. The CAB was divided between accepting this trend unquestioningly and reacting against it, stressing the continued importance of the trained or professional amateur alongside the social work professional.

The NCAB also set about attempting to improve its statistics gathering service which had been relatively neglected during the early 1950s. This involved streamlining the categories of enquiries that were used to gather statistical information. Obsolete enquiry categories were eradicated and others merged, leaving ten broad categories of enquiry: communications, education and training, employment and tax, civil information, family and personal, insurance, medical, property and housing, service and ex-service, and trade and consumer problems.

The importance of training continued to be emphasized. Even before the Rent Act was passed, the CAB had anticipated the rise in enquiries regarding a complicated piece of legislation and set about training its volunteer advisors in the workings of the Act. It

³⁴ Ibid.

³⁵ Ibid., 28.

did this in partnership with the Ministry of Housing, which provided civil servants who lectured at CAB training events across the country.

In 1958 the University of London approached the CAB for assistance with its External Diploma in Social Studies. The Diploma was intended to train new entrants to the social work profession as well as those people wishing to gain a qualification recognised in their profession. The Diploma Regulations required students to complete a total of six months full time approved practical work under supervision. The University asked the CAB to arrange for students to have a short period of experience in a bureau for practical training.³⁶ Another important area of training related to the Landlord and Tenant (Temporary Provisions) Act 1958. The CAB publicised the training meetings in the national press. At the first meeting in August 1958, 70 representatives from 38 bureaux attended and heard representatives of the MHLG and the Lord Chancellor's department.

In September 1955 an informal conference was held in Leicester. The purpose was to give an opportunity to the Chair and members of the National Committee to meet Chairs of Regional Committees, Regional Officers and key workers.³⁷ It was proposed to use this opportunity for informal discussions on important aspects of CAB work, to which insufficient time could be given at day meetings. The group had no executive powers. At the conference the delegates discussed the place of the CAB in a modern community; standards of work and how these would be maintained; the need for more and better organized schemes of training; regional and county committees; and co-operation with the Law Society. Its purpose was to discuss projected developments in CAB work and the effect these might have on the bureau including, relationships with local authorities.

The nature of the training reflected the role that was envisaged for the volunteer by headquarters and regional committees responsible for organizing the training. The growing importance of the bureaux meant that training became more strictly defined. In 1957, the headquarters argued that the problems coming to bureaux could be divided into three. First were those enquiries in which the bureau workers were the

³⁶ LMA AC 73/46/16 CAB 87 Policy Students Visiting Bureaux

³⁷ LMA AC 73/46/8 CAB Ctte/8 CAB Situation Report for NCABC, 26 October 1955.

admitted authority, such as questions relating to landlord and tenant problems, social security questions and trading problems including hire purchase. Second were those social questions requiring the attention of skilled and experienced caseworkers, marriage guidance counsellors or similar specialist officers. Third were a range of questions arising from the day to day work of the bureaux on which, for the time being, the bureau worker was the specialist, in the absence of any one organization better qualified to deal with them. The 'approved' function of the CAB service was to take some steps towards seeing that some means was provided, either through a new organization or specialist, to deal with them.³⁸

At the same time, Oswald spoke about the difficulties of getting workers from some of the smaller and often less good bureaux to attend training meetings, especially residential ones.³⁹ A list of do's and don'ts for new bureau workers also shows the increasing influence of professionalized social work techniques on voluntary work. The list of do's included: attempt to put the enquirer at ease; make sure you obtain all the facts before trying to help – a grievance against an official is often a misunderstanding; maintain respect for the individual, this is of fundamental importance for social work; remember confidentiality, freedom from bias and prejudice are essential at all times; attend all worker meetings; take advantage of training conferences and be prepared to study and read to help your work. The list of don'ts included: forgetting courtesy; imposing own standards and judgments upon the people interviewed; hesitating before saying 'I don't know'; hesitating to offer an appointment with a consultant who would know; and, finally, attempting to give legal advice.⁴⁰

Sometime in the late 1950s, a Psychiatric Social Worker, Jane Brandon, of the Department of Psychological Medicine, King's College, University Durham, drew up a list of basic qualities required in CAB interviewing work. According to this, the basic qualities which should be developed by the social worker included: interest in people,

³⁸ LMA AC 73/46/8 CAB Ctte 8, NCAB Committee, Paper on the scope of CAB work in relation to other types of social work and other organizations, 17 June 1957.

³⁹ LMA AC 73/46/2 CAB/Finance 7/CAB and Gulbenkian Grant, Letter from K. M. Oswald to A. Sanderson, The Gulbenkian Foundation, 18 February 1959.

⁴⁰ LMA AC 73/46/16 CAB 37/5 Recruitment and Training lit., 'Training of CAB Workers, 'Do's and Dont's for new bureaux workers.'

respect for each individual, sensitivity, permissiveness and experience of life. It was important to collect the facts and to greet the distressed person more warmly than when addressing a self-assured professional person. The client 'is a complex individual whose life experiences have contributed much to the kind of person he is when we meet him first.'⁴¹

⁴¹ LMA AC 73/46/16 CAB 37/5 Recruitment and Training lit., Notes on interviewing for Citizens' Advice bureaux staff, Mrs J Brandon, 4.

6.4. External relations

In its relationship with society and the state, the CAB continued to attract broad public support, both from its volunteers and those outside the organization. There were few criticisms of the CAB and its work. The one criticism that was heard from time to time related to its relatively poor publicity. Few bureaux were effective in actively publicizing their work and raising public awareness of its services. Enquirers who made their way into a local bureau still mainly did so when referred there by another organization, or by word of mouth. This poor publicity reflected in part, the poor financial state of the organization previously discussed relative to the 1940s. However, the CAB did continue to use newspapers to spread awareness of its work. A good example of this was the CAB's use of newspapers to raise awareness of the changes resulting from the 1957 Rent Act.

Most importantly, the CAB continued to act in partnership with the state, not against it. A good example of the continuing importance of partnership and co-operation between statutory and voluntary organizations was that experienced during the arrival of first Hungarian, and then Anglo-Egyptian refugees in 1956. In 1956 the Hungarian department of the British Council for Aid to Refugees (BCAR), considered the part that bureaux could play in helping Hungarians to take their place in the community. As refugees moved out of hostels, it was envisaged they would need information and advice about National Insurance, income tax, house purchase, hire purchase etc. Bureaux were informed about the special help which was available in certain circumstances in the way of grants and loans through the BCAR. While Hungarians were encouraged to make use of the normal CAB machinery, in view of the language difficulty, in places where there were groups of Hungarians (upward of 100), bureaux were asked to consider establishing special Hungarian sessions which an interpreter could attend.⁴² The London CAB sent workers to help at the Hungarian Refugee headquarters.

In late 1956 all British subjects were expelled from Egypt following the Suez Crisis. Most of the 7,000 refugees arrived in December 1956 and were accommodated in ten

⁴² LMA 4016/IS/A/01/033(3) Executive Committee Minutes, Report of departments and associated groups, 10 October 1957, 8.

hostels across the country. Half of these were run by the National Assistance Board, but the rest were run by the British Red Cross and St John's Ambulance Brigade. The CAB were invited by the Home Office to set up in each hostel to provide information and advice for the refugees on how to obtain resettlement grants and maintenance allowances being paid by the Anglo-Egyptian Resettlement Board, set up in February 1957.⁴³ Until then all financial help had been provided by the Anglo-Egyptian Aid society. By June 1957 a CAB officer had been appointed for each of the ten hostels. In each case, the CAB continued to advise on matters such as personal and other cash allowances; where and how to buy furniture; the availability of second hand clothing, furniture and blankets. In this last instance, the CAB officer was often a progressive influence on local authorities who, according to bureau staff, were keen to veto the purchase of what they deemed 'luxury items', with the allowances granted to refugee families.⁴⁴

The responsibility for the Anglo-Egyptians was at first divided between the National Assistance Board, which ran the hostels and an independent society, helped by Government grant, which cared for those not living in hostels. In February 1957, the whole task was put in the hands of a newly created semi-official Board. In the case of the Hungarians there were several reasons for the government to rely on voluntary organizations to look after the refugees. Large sums of money had been subscribed by the public before the refugees arrived in Britain and it was appropriate that such funds should be spent by voluntary bodies rather than by Government departments. The think tank *PEP* commented that: 'The settling of refugees into the community is a complex task requiring close attention to a variety of problems – language, housing, employment, education – which vary from one person to another. Voluntary organizations are perhaps better at dealing sympathetically with such a variety of individual needs than is a Government department.'⁴⁵

⁴³ Ronald H. W. Case, 'Anglo-Egyptian Resettlement', *Social Service Quarterly*, 33/2 (1959) 73-6.

⁴⁴ *Ibid.*

⁴⁵ Political and Economic Planning, 'Refugees in Britain: Hungarians and Anglo-Egyptians' *Planning* 24/419 (1958), 34.

The Hungarian operation began under an independent body, with funds from voluntary subscriptions, but with administrative costs paid by the Government. In the case of the Anglo-Egyptians, the Government accepted responsibility and provided money to a semi-official Board. The Board of eight members, five of them senior representatives of voluntary organizations (including Miss Oswald of the CAB) was organized as a charitable trust, so, although using public money, it could be a flexible instrument applying the Government's emergency policy with wide discretion and with the help of the voluntary workers. As the think tank Political and Economic Planning commented:

The rapid success of the Hungarian refugee operation, and the slower but no less praiseworthy achievements in the more difficult task of resettling the Anglo-Egyptians, may be ascribed above all to the efforts of the voluntary organizations. If a lesson is to be drawn [...] it is that a partnership between voluntary agencies and Government departments is the key to success in work which involves a wide range of individual needs. Without belittling the important tasks carried out by the various departments and other organs of Government, it can be said that these refugee operations provided an example of the continuing value in the modern state of independent welfare organizations. That reliance was placed on them to do so much of the field work was right and proper, and amply justified by the results.⁴⁶

Another important aspect of the CAB's relationship with the state was the way that it continued to argue for piecemeal reform in many areas of social policy. The experience of bureaux continued to be fed to state institutions in the form of information and briefings. In particular, bureaux continued to report on gaps and anomalies in government schemes and people's reactions to them. This experience was often embodied in evidence to Royal Commissions or Governmental committees, including the Piercy Committee on the Rehabilitation, Training and Resettlement of Disabled Persons, the Franks Committee on Administrative Tribunals and Enquiries, and the

⁴⁶ Political and Economic Planning, 'Refugees in Britain: Hungarians and Anglo-Egyptians' *Planning* 24/419 (1958), 35.

Younghusband Committee on the Function, Recruitment and Training of Social Workers in the local authorities' Health and Welfare Services.⁴⁷

Often, the experience of the bureaux was transmitted directly to the Government department concerned, as in the case of the enquiries arising from the Rent Act, 1957 and the Landlord and Tenant (Temporary Provisions) Act, 1958. Reports on the experiences of different bureau were prepared and made available to the Minister of Housing and Local Government. The CAB noted that the Ministry needed to take greater care in planning for the distribution of prescribed forms as well as the needs of poorly educated and elderly people. The six weeks' notice for Form T was too short. Existing certificates of disrepair acted as barriers to rent increase. Middle aged or older tenants of decontrolled property, although given the right to buy, could not afford to do so. The anxiety suffered by decontrolled tenants while the process went ahead led to many of them being forced into signing unfair agreements. New three year tenancies often involve the tenant's responsibility for some of all of the repairs. Poor tenants may be faced with heavy and unforeseeable liability. Legal charges faced by tenant during preparation of the agreement. There was the general problem of old people, especially those whose means although limited were too high to enable them to get help from the Assistance Board. The difficulties were in the decontrolled sector and especially the position of old people who could not pay either an increased rent or purchase. The CAB hoped to see some recognition of the position of others in low income groups, particularly those with fixed incomes, who if they had to leave would inevitably have difficulty in finding accommodation within their means or indeed at all. The CAB raised the issue of evictions and homelessness in October 1958, even for a limited number of people. This comment the Ministry of Housing and Local Government took very seriously.⁴⁸

The CAB took issue with the form of the tenancy agreement prepared by the Birmingham and District Property Owners' Association for use by members offering new three year tenancies to decontrolled tenants. They argued that to make the tenant

⁴⁷ *Report of the Working Party on Social Workers in the local authority Health and Welfare Services* (London: HMSO, 1959)

⁴⁸ TNA HLG 102/390 National Council of Social Service, Citizens Advice Bureaux, Oct 1958.

liable for all repairs to the interior of the premises and for internal decoration was unfair and likely to be onerous for weekly tenants. The local CAB in Birmingham and the local Law Society made representations to the Birmingham Association to prevent the inclusion of this kind of condition.⁴⁹

CAB staff gave lectures to officials at the Treasury, lectures to the Home Office on the Statutory and Voluntary Social Services in a training course for young executive officers; and lectures to Ministry of Pensions' Welfare officers on a variety of subjects. Local officers of many Central Departments, e.g. Labour Exchange managers, National Insurance and Assistance Board officers and others regularly lectured to CAB workers in the course of the National CAB training syllabus, and officers of the Ministry of Housing and Local Government and of the Lord Chancellors Department lectured to CAB workers on the Rent Act 1957 and the Landlord and Tenant (Temporary provisions) Act, 1958.

Civil servants within Whitehall responded favorably to the work of the CAB. Miss C. M. Liptrott, of the Ministry of Housing and Local Government (MHLG), wrote to Mr J. Palmer of the National Assistance Board explaining the nature of the relationship in 1959:

'We have very little to do with the work of the Central Committee. Most of our contacts are at the local level - between Area officers and local bureaux and there is no doubt that they have been very useful in enabling us to refer our applicants to them for advice and help mainly recently in connection with the Rent Act and Landlord and Tenant Act. They have too given advice and help to some of the Board's applicants who have been referred to them with problems of hire purchase and no doubt on other miscellaneous matters. Sometimes of course our local officers can give advice which is of a routine or general nature but if the subject is technical the applicant is usually referred to the Citizens Advice Bureau or if he is unable to approach them himself the Board's local officer will probably take the initiative.'⁵⁰

⁴⁹ TNA HLG 102/390 National Council of Social Service, Citizens Advice Bureaux, Oct 1958.

⁵⁰ TNA AST 7/1745, Letter from Miss CM Liptrott MHLG, Mr J Palmer, NAB, 8 May 1959.

Criticisms of the CAB's impartiality came from local rival information sources. In June 1958 the Chairman of the Edmonton Trades Council, Councillor J.W. Halt complained in the *Tottenham Herald* of the 'anonymous person in the Edmonton Citizens Advice Bureau, who is giving advice on trade union matters. For all we know he might be some big businessman.'⁵¹

Veronica Weeks, a travelling officer for the CAB headquarters, found that the promotion of any new bureau in a town involved a great deal of detailed work. She often encountered passive resistance from local authorities. She argued that this resistance wasn't caused by a lack of confidence in the service, but by the economic situation of the last few years. Weeks also justified the difficulties she experienced in her work but arguing that the towns in which good leadership and enlightened local authorities made it relatively easy to promote social work organization already had bureau, and that those which are still without a bureau at this stage were likely to present more difficulties. There were exceptions, for example Southampton, where the strongest support was given to the plan to promote a new bureau, both by the local authority and the voluntary organizations. In Southampton the initiative was taken by the leader of the Labour Party, suggesting that opposition was not related to one particular political party though there were instances where resistance to bureau, and indeed the closing down of an existing one, seem to have resulted from a party political motive.⁵²

Many central government departments continued to ask the help of the CAB. Some departments had standing arrangements with the CAB headquarters to pass on particular types of problem. For example, the Principle Probate Registry for some years referred to CAB headquarters people with whom they were in correspondence over the probate of a will at the point that the matter was outside the jurisdiction of the Probate Registry, or where it was clear that a written explanation would not serve. In some instances, these cases required legal help from a Poor Man's Lawyer, but often it only required a simple explanation by the CAB worker.

⁵¹ LMA AC 73/46/22 Edmonton, *Tottenham Herald*, Who is a trade union adviser, 27 June 1958.

⁵² LMA AC 73/46/8 CAB Cttee/8, National CAB Committee CAB Situation Report, 26 October 1955.

CAB also dealt with staff problems referred by welfare officers within government departments. Examples during the late 1950s included questions over holiday accommodation for the children of civil servants working abroad and also arrangements for mentally ill people who needed help with their business affairs and whose accommodation and furniture needed looking after while they were in a mental hospital.

Relations with the political parties remained good, but variable. Relations with Labour party and Labour controlled local authorities continued to vary according to the quality of the local bureau. CAB continued to be valued by Labour parties in certain parts of the country on account of their efficiency. In Coventry in March 1957, the secretary of the local bureau, Mrs Bonhomme, was invited to give evidence to a Working Party set up by the Coventry Borough Labour Party to examine and report on causes of unemployment. In her evidence Bonhomme reported the negative effects of redundancy on family life, as well as the negative impact of adverts appearing in local newspapers offering home work, which in fact required an initial outlay of up to £10. She also highlighted the difficulties regarding National Assistance claims and the transition to work.⁵³ In 1959, the MP for Coventry South, Elaine Burton, wrote to the secretary to the Labour leader of the Council, Tom Locksley, asking him to make a grant to support the work of the CAB. She noted that, of the people who came to see her with their problems, many had first received guidance from the CAB. Burton concluded, 'I believe the work done in our city is something we could not afford to be without.'⁵⁴

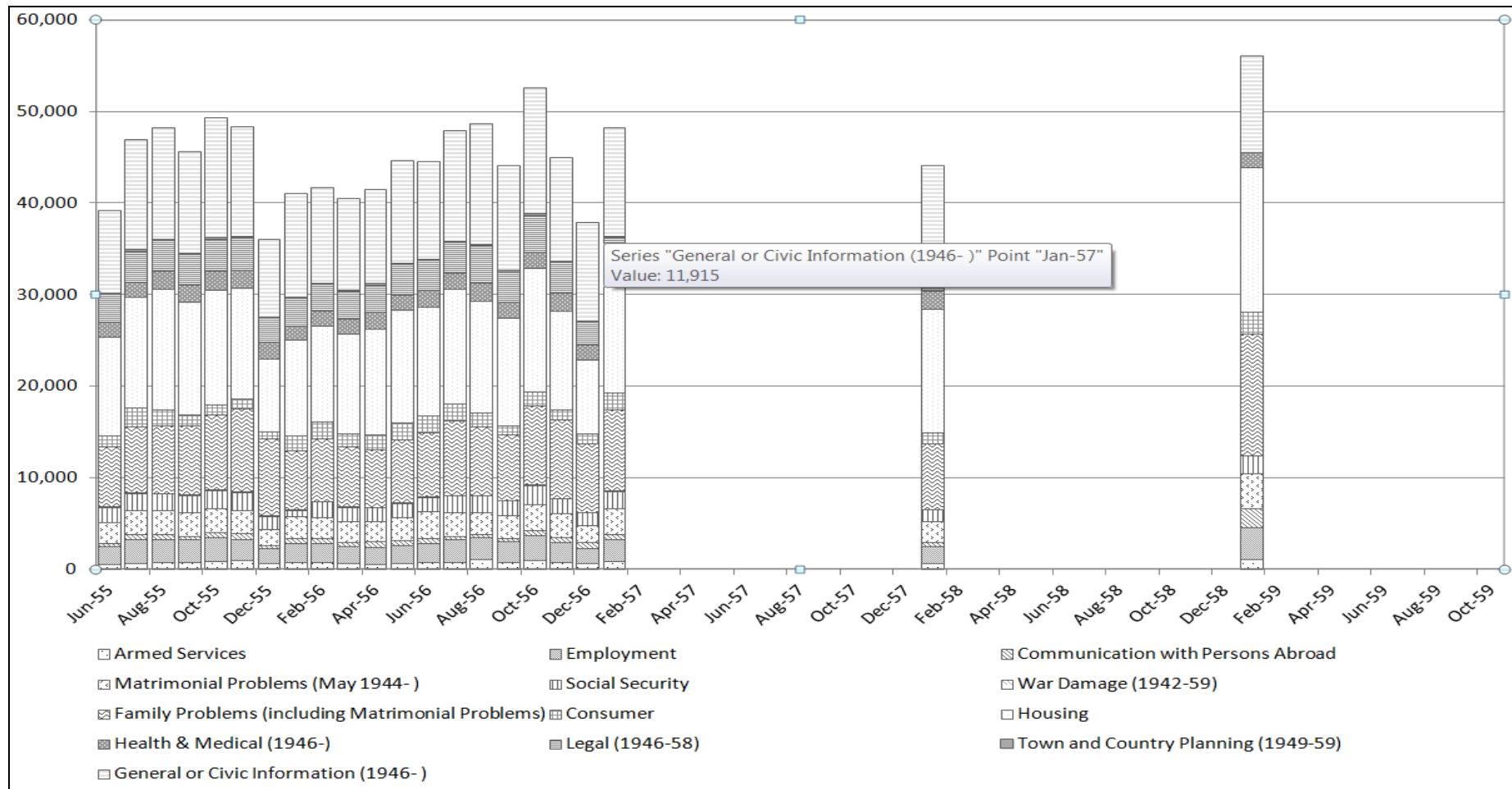
⁵³ MSS 11/3/75/26 Evidence [given to working party on redundancy] by Mrs Bonhomme of the Citizens Advice Bureau, about the increasing number of redundancies and the effect of redundancy on family and home life. Duplicated and manuscript draft report, 21 Mar 1957.

⁵⁴ MSS. 11/3/18/259 Letter from Elaine Burton MP to Cllr T. Locksley, 4 June 1959. On the letter Cllr Locksley wrote, 'we shall forfeit much goodwill in the city if we refuse.'

6.5. Outcomes

The adherence of the CAB to a broadly piecemeal reformist agenda was reflected in the outcomes of CAB work. For an individual using the bureau, the result was usually the successful resolution of their problem or, failing that, the details of someone who had the power or skills to resolve it for them. Figure 6 shows the continuing prevalence of housing problems, family problems, and requests for general and civic information within the workload of the CAB.

Figure 6 Number and proportion of enquiries, June 1955 to October 1959¹



¹ LMA AC 73/46/66; 67; 68; 69; 70; Statistical Abstracts, 1942-59. Unfortunately there is no continuous run of data between 1955 and 1959.

Politically, perhaps the most important outcomes of the CAB work during this period were the modest reforms suggested to legal aid. The National CAB Committee made several important points regarding the administration of the legal aid scheme. It criticized the large financial contribution required from some applicants, the difficulty of establishing a *prima facie* case, the need for assistance with negotiation, the social needs of applicants for legal aid and advice and the wider concern following the piecemeal implementation of the 1949 Act. They were glad that legal aid in the County Courts would be available from the autumn of 1956, particularly in view of the large numbers of housing cases relating to the 1954 Housing Repairs and Rent Acts that reached the bureaux. They hoped that aid would be extended to the Magistrates Courts to enable people to bring divorce cases. The National Committee argued for the need for a comprehensive scheme for the provision of legal advice and was anxious to co-operate with the government in seeking an arrangement.¹ Their desires were partially fulfilled when legal aid was extended to cover County Courts in 1956.

In March 1959 the section in the English and Scottish Acts providing for oral legal advice came into force. This had not been implemented in 1949. However, the income limits for those eligible for free legal aid remained at a disposable income of £420 a year, set in 1949. This did not take into account the 75 per cent increase in the cost of living since 1945, when the limits were first proposed by the Rushcliffe Committee.

An equally important contribution was made by the CAB to the gradual emergence of a consumer politics. In early 1955 the CAB appointed a committee to examine problems around the use of hire purchase. Sir John Wrigley, KBE, CB and former deputy secretary of the Ministry of Housing and Local Government was appointed as chairman.²

¹ 1955-56 Appendices to the Minutes of evidence taken before the select committee on estimates, *subcommittee D) Appendix 8, Memorandum submitted by the National Council of Social Service (National Citizens Advice Bureaux Committee)

² Members of the sub-committee included: B. E. Astbury CBE (former secretary of the FWA); Mrs V. Bonhomme, Coventry Citizens' Advice Bureau; Lt. Commander R. G. Brown, Soldiers', Sailors', Airmen's Families Association; Miss D. W. Homer, Women's Group on Public Welfare; Miss D. C. Keeling, Chairman of the Yorkshire CAB Committee; Miss E. Kennedy, Church of England Moral Welfare Council; Mrs Palmer-

The hire purchase committee, without criticizing the principle of hire purchase, found that many problems were caused by an inability to relate hire purchase commitments to the family budget as a whole and this was aggravated by unreasonable degree of hire pressure salesmanship. These difficulties could be minimized by action on the part of the vendors, and by greater education in family budgeting on the part of the purchasers. The Report argued for the importance of making information and guidance on the economics of home life available to young people.

Notable problems reported by CAB included: photographs of children sold at vastly inflated prices for weekly payments; agents selling educational books waiting outside schools to get the names of pupils and their teachers and giving buyers the impression that they represented the local education authority; and the activities of money lenders, including confiscating Family Allowance books until the amount was repaid. The Sub-Committee also noted with concern two examples of hire purchase offers to children: an advertisement in a children's paper, offering such articles as spaceman suits, crystal radios, etc., on deferred terms; and a firm enrolling 'agents' among schoolchildren for sale of foreign stamps to fellow-scholars at a commission of one penny in the shilling. Other types of problems frequently quoted in evidence included: complaints about increasing pressure through postal advertising of new goods and services; unsatisfactory methods of appointing agents; dishonest agents; poor quality goods; damaged or faulty goods; failure to inform a firm of changed circumstances; minors signing agreements; wives pledging husband's credit; and failure to distinguish between hiring and hire purchase.

To address these problems, the report recommended that the National Citizens' Advice Bureaux Committee should seek, to educate the public through leaflets, home budgeting advice, booklets for social workers, and wider education in financial literacy through such broadcasting media as Mrs. Dale's Diary, The Archers, and the Grove Family. The CAB should discuss with trade associations and, if necessary with the Board of Trade, modifications and reforms to the existing system of hire purchase, particularly to the wording of agreements; record cards; and badges of membership for

salespeople. It should also seek the extension of pedlar's licensing to door-to-door retail salesmen and those seeking orders for drapery and furnishings. CAB should investigate the legal position as to the liability of firms for their agents and seek legislation to prevent erosion of such liability. They should explore the possibility of action by local authorities, such as providing built in furniture in local authority housing, and providing notices in rent books of the danger of over committing their income. Finally, the CAB were to discuss with the National Savings Committee the possibility of promoting saving schemes specially directed to young people.

Part three of the report was material intended for use in discussion groups, to stimulate group discussion among, for example, members of women's and young people's clubs, preparation for marriage courses, in community centres and generally those concerned with informal education. The purpose of discussion groups was educate people in financial literacy, for example to make clear the difference between hire purchase and credit buying and the importance of assessing the amount which could reasonably be undertaken for payment each week or month. The report also stressed the importance of an accurate record of payments, for:

Experience suggests that purchases made on the doorstep are often less carefully considered than those made in a shop, because the customer who has taken the trouble to go to a shop usually does so with some definite purchase in mind. On the other hand, and particularly in remote areas or on large housing estates where the shopping facilities are some little distance away, reputable door-to-door salesmen perform a valuable function. Discussion may help members of a group to see what kind of purchases can be made satisfactorily in this way and which others are almost certain to be regretted.³

The importance of family discussion of the budget was also emphasized. It was argued that many of the troubles that arose from heavy hire purchase commitments might have been avoided had there been full and frank discussion between husband and wife on the spending of family income.

³ National Council of Social Service, *Hire Purchase and Credit Buying: Report of a sub-committee appointed by the National Citizens' Advice Bureaux Committee* (London: National Council of Social Service, 1957), 30.

In a different area of its work with immigrants the CAB made an important contribution to the integration of West Indians within British society. Here a similar trend towards moderate social work methods is also visible. By the mid 1950s, the numbers of West Indians moving to the United Kingdom had reached 20,000 per year. In 1955, the Family Welfare Association set up a special Citizens Advice Bureau, staffed by a British West Indian and English social workers in Lambeth, where there was a large immigrant population, but it was open to all residents of the borough. The finances were supplied by the London Parochial Charities Foundation and the Family Welfare Association and the project ran until 1957 when funds became exhausted. Over 12,000 enquiries were dealt over that time, from migrants and local residents.⁴ The types of social problems they experienced could be divided into two categories: first, those resulting from the strangeness of the new social environment for immigrants; second, from the prevailing prejudices and attitudes of members of the host community, who tended to treat the new immigrants as outsiders.⁵

Sheila Patterson noted in her study *Dark Strangers: a study of West Indians in London*, that voluntary services were not always available for migrants. In smaller voluntary organizations, organizers felt reluctant to extend full assistance to migrants, on the grounds that local people had first claim on the resources of the association which was primarily set up to serve local needs. However, Patterson noted the importance of the CAB project in Lambeth. She argued that it had performed a considerable service in easing tensions during this crucial period of migrant-host accommodation, at a time when relatively little was being done in the area by most other agencies.⁶

CAB efforts did not stop there, and, following the race riots of August and September 1958 in Notting Hill, West London, the Family Welfare Association, supported financially by the Kensington Borough Council, paid for Yolande Baum-Achong, a British African-Caribbean social worker (and daughter of the well-known Lancashire and West Indies cricketer Ellis Baum-Achong – originator of the ‘chinaman’, a left-arm

⁴ Many of these related to housing, nurseries for unmarried mothers, travel information, employment, hire purchase.

⁵ S. K. Ruck, ed., *The West Indian comes to England*, (London: Routledge and Paul, 1960).

⁶ Sheila Patterson, *Dark Strangers: a study of West Indians in London* (London, Penguin: 1965) 234.

wrist spin delivery) to join the staff of the Kensington bureaux. The efforts of these two bureaux were focused on easing social tensions while enhancing prospects for integration.

For the volunteers, volunteering for the CAB continued to bring enormous satisfaction. As well as the pleasure gained from sociability, individuals felt satisfaction at achieving favourable outcomes for people, as well as employing professional skills and knowledge. For Thomas Annis of the Thornton Cleveleys bureau in Lancashire, wrote in 1957: 'To new CAB workers, I would say that the work is something that gets into your blood and becomes an essential part of your well-being and happiness, especially when you find that there is a very full appreciation of your endeavours to help the citizen.' The work, he commented, gave an 'inward satisfaction that is beyond all price.'⁷ During his years working for the bureau, he set about making himself an expert on pensions and he repeatedly obtained pensions for older people when they had been told that they were not entitled to them. Mr Annis was extremely proud of his voluntary work and wrote to the Chair of the National Committee with some pride on his retirement in 1958 saying that: 'I was called upon by a Hectwood man, who said, he had come from our Police headquarters in Hectwood, where the Superintendent had given him my address and had said, "Mr Annis is the only man we know of in this area, who can help you in your trouble."⁸ Another CAB volunteer, Molly Yates, of Letchworth also felt pleasure at the sense of importance of being a volunteer. She dealt with social problems at home, as well as on the street. 'I don't mind in the least', she noted in September 1955, 'I am only too pleased to help them, it's great work and well worthwhile.'⁹

⁷ LMA AC 73/46/61 Thornton Cleveleys, Letter from T. Annis to Cllr R Fitton, 3 March 1957.

⁸ LMA AC 73/46/61 Thornton Cleveleys, Letter from T. Annis to Farrer Brown, 3 March 1958.

⁹ LMA AC 73/46/59 Stevenage Letter from Molly Yates to K. M. Oswald, 28 September 1955.

6.6 Conclusion

In the middle and later years of the 1950s, the CAB as a social service moved beyond mere survival and instead could begin to think how to expand and consolidate its position. The aims of the CAB were broadly continuous with the past. Its purpose was still to advise and inform the individual, but their remit was widening to include new problems. Family and personal problems were still high on the list of popular enquiries; closely followed by housing and other problems. The aim was still to mediate between the state and the individual, as well as the professional and the individual. The CAB aimed to translate the language of the professional and the bureaucrat into something the ordinary person could understand. This concern reflected a wider concern with the role of information and bureaucracy in a democracy.

Another important area of work related to consumer problems. These began to feature on the ideological radar of the CAB as it, and other organizations began to engage in consumer politics. Matthew Hilton has written a systematic account of these consumer movements, ideologies and official institutions of consumption in Britain. He argues that modern consumerism is a middle-class movement, and it has had an impact on legislation and on the development of single issue political campaigning.¹⁰ The CAB continued to work alongside the welfare state, proving the continuing importance and adaptability of voluntary organizations. The finances of the organization were beginning to be placed on a sounder footing for the first time since the late 1940s. However, the impact of the financial stringency of the 1950s was still being felt.

Local authorities and central government showed varying levels of political and financial support. Many more relied on CAB not from any ideological predisposition but for pragmatic reasons. The relationship between the headquarters of the CAB and individual bureaux remained fluid and ill defined. Consequently, individual bureau and volunteers could make their own relationships with local authorities, sometimes without headquarters assistance. For headquarters, meanwhile, its desire to strength its role and presence within the organization was evident its growing concern to raise standards through training and attempts to enforce uniformity.

¹⁰ Matthew Hilton, *Consumerism in 20th-Century Britain* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005).

Thanks to the continued enthusiasm of its volunteers, the CAB survived and largely maintained the number and quality of bureaux through the 1950s. Despite the continuing absence of government financial support, voluntary organizations such as the CAB did not fade away but continued to work alongside the statutory authorities. CAB continued to raise its standards to match those of the statutory services where possible.

Its relationship with its environment also changed. Labour began to reassess its relations with voluntary organizations such as the CAB, while the Conservative governments of Harold Macmillan and Anthony Eden began to show some divergence within the party ranks over the future direction of the welfare state. The 1957 Rent Act was an attempt by a Conservative government to create an “opportunity state”, but, in reality, the CAB and other voluntary organizations were left to clear up the mess as thousands of people contacted them, unsure of their rights, many of whom had been unfairly treated by their landlords while many were equally confused. The CAB’s relationship with the state was often tense and fraught with misunderstandings. The 1957 Rent Act showed that there was still an important role for voluntary action alongside the welfare state. As the Piercy committee, appointed to consider the rehabilitation of disabled people argued:

The future of voluntary organizations lies in making the fullest use of the natural suitability of voluntary service for exploration and development in new fields of work and the fact that voluntary work naturally can supply a personal interest and care which is more difficult to provide through the ordinary machinery of public welfare service.¹¹

¹¹ *Report of the Committee of Inquiry on Rehabilitation, Training and Resettlement of Disabled Persons* (1956: Cmd. 9883) 83.

7. Resurgence and renewal, 1959-64

7.1. Introduction

This chapter focuses on the period 1959-1964, when the Citizens Advice Bureaux organization continued to revive. This was partly due to a revival of government interest in the form of a grant of funds in 1960. This renewal coincided with a period of introspection over the welfare state led by social scientists including Peter Townsend, Brian Abel Smith and Richard Titmuss, Professor of Social Administration at the London School of Economics. There was also growth in the demand for social information of the type provided by the CAB. This was followed by the recommendation of the Molony Committee on Consumer Protection in 1962 that the CAB should receive £27,000 of government funding for providing a consumer advisory service. All this coincided with the determination of the Conservative governments to create an “opportunity state” and renewed belief in corporatism and centrist social and economic planning.¹

The CAB movement emerged from the 1950s and financial stringency to a more favourable economic climate in the 1960s. There was growing recognition of the need for advice services. The Younghusband *Committee on Social Workers in the local authority Health and Welfare Services*, 1959 reported that ‘good information services have become an essential feature of modern life and should be an integral part of the whole range of social services provided by local authorities.’² The Ingleby Committee on Children and Young Persons reported in 1960 on the need for a comprehensive, generalist service of information and advice.³ In addition, the CAB service benefited financially from the general interest in advice work. In 1960 the Ministry of Housing made a grant of £2,500 a year for three years to the National Committee, the first central government funding since 1951, describing it as ‘a token of appreciation of the service rendered by the citizens advice bureau to the community’. In 1960, housing was the source of 25 per cent of the Service’s enquiries. The grant was increased in 1961 to £5,000 per annum.

¹ Paul Bridgen and Rodney Lowe, *Welfare Policy under the Conservatives, 1951-1961* (London, PRO 1998).

² *Report of the Working Party on Social Workers in the local authority Health and Welfare Services* (London: HMSO, 1959) para. 1018-1026.

³ *Report of the Committee on Children and Young Persons* (1960: Cmnd. 1191)

In 1962, the Molony Committee on Consumer Protection stated: 'it is plain that the Citizens Advice Bureaux have already developed an advisory and informative service of great consumer interest, and that they are closely in touch with consumer problems in a way unequalled by any other organization. Because of the bureaux' current work in the field and the organization's inherent capacity to enlarge the scope of its operation, we favour the establishment of a country-wide advisory service for the consumer through their agency.'⁴ In 1963-64 following the publication of this report, the Board of Trade contributed a grant of £27,000 for the promotion of new bureaux and strengthening existing ones.

The numbers of bureaux climbed from 416 in 1960 to 429 in 1964. Equally, the estimated number of enquiries rose from 1.1 million in 1960 to 1.4 million in 1964. The area officers, responsible for monitoring standards in the bureaux, increased from 10 in the early 1960s to 14 in 1964. Selection procedures for voluntary workers were tightened: candidates were asked to submit application forms and selection committees were set up to interview them. Considerable efforts were made to improve the training of bureau workers. By the mid 1960s, the complexity of the issues on which advice was needed was apparent to all and a greater need for training was recognized both by volunteers and the majority of paid staff.

Some of these developments, understandably, generated tensions within the CAB movement. This chapter considers how these changing circumstances affected its program and goals. Given the increased interest in information services, did the goals, tactics and strategies of the CAB stay the same? Were there changes in its structure or internal disagreements about the direction of future policy, given the revival of government interest and financial support? The influx of financial resources presented organizers at headquarters with a number of options on how to use them for structural redevelopment and expansion. The chapter then turns to focus on the stress placed on the CAB's external relations, with government, opinion formers, and professional groups, and by the new relationship created with the Board of Trade. It concludes by considering the impact of the CAB on society and its members in this period.

⁴ *Final Report of the Committee on Consumer Protection* (1961-62 Cmnd. 1781), para 493.

Examination of these questions illustrates how the CAB continued to adapt to affluence, which continued to accelerate in this period, and how it engaged politically with the debates over “private affluence and public squalor”. Its aims and principles remained broadly consistent throughout, but, as before, there were conflicts within the bureaux concerning how far adaptation should go. Also, the renewed interest in information services, particularly in government, highlights the importance of the continuing use by government of voluntary organizations such as the CAB on an agency basis. Meanwhile, the CAB increased in usefulness with the growth in amount and complexity of statutory and voluntary provision. It continued to operate as a site for the political mobilization of social workers and professional middle class networks, particularly women’s networks, to engage with and campaign about the welfare state.

7.2. Aims

The general aims and specific goals of the CAB remained substantially unaltered during the early 1960s. Its purpose remained to make available to the individual accurate information and skilled advice on many of the personal problems that arose in daily life; explaining legislation; helping citizens benefit from and use wisely the services provided by the state, and providing counsel to men and women in the many difficulties which beset them in an increasingly complex world.⁵ The CAB wished to produce informed citizens able to make independent decisions on how best to use welfare services. In the early 1960s, these goals required new strategies and tactics in response to social change and the continued growth of affluence. The programme for providing information and advice remained the same, but the greater affluence of the early 1960s, and the changing social and economic environment, caused the number of enquiries concerning consumer issues, including shoddy goods, to rise as a percentage of all queries. A major watershed in consumption was crossed in the late 1950s, following a decade of full employment and low inflation. Total consumer expenditure on durable goods rose from £1,004 million per annum in 1957 to £1,465 million per annum in 1960.⁶

There is also evidence of a subtler shift in the manner in which the CAB conducted its traditional practice of collecting information on the kind of problems causing people difficulty and distress and bringing these problems to the notice of those with the power to prevent or solve them. There was a gradual shift towards a more confident approach to engaging with government, and to more direct criticism of the welfare state. These developments reflected broader changes within political culture, which saw the re-emergence of the extra-parliamentary pressure groups such as the Campaign for Nuclear Disarmament, and the emergence of the New Left. While its methods appeared moderate by comparison, the CAB continued lobbying for gradual change in government policy, particularly on housing and consumer issues.

⁵ Modern Records Centre (MRC), Warwick, MSS.292b.809.1, The National Standing Conference of Citizens Advice Bureaux : Reports of Addresses, October 1961, 2.

⁶ Dilwyn Porter, "‘Never-never Land’: Britain under the Conservatives, 1951-1964" in Nick Tiratsoo (ed.) *From Blitz to Blair: A New History of Britain since 1939* (London: Weidenfeld and Nicolson, 1997), 119.

The CAB operated during a period of profound introspection and increasing criticism of the institutions of British society. In this context, CAB leaders recognised that its role needed to change. Professor David C. Marsh, Head of the Department of Social Sciences at the University of Nottingham and Chairman of the East Midlands Citizens' Advice Bureaux Advisory committee, argued that, in addition to its function as a centre for information and advice, the CAB should carry out its function of acting as a sounding board and as a feedback organization, reporting back to government departments and other organizations on the way particular services or measures were working. Speaking at the National Standing Conference of Citizens' Advice Bureaux at Harrogate in October 1961, Marsh argued:

In the field of social policy there is no statutory body whose function it is to examine and to report on the way in which a particular piece of social legislation is implemented, or on the way in which a particular piece of social legislation is implemented, or on the way in which it is meeting the needs for which it was designed.⁷

Although CAB had always had this aim, it would seem to have been lost during the 1950s, perhaps due to financial stringency or the relative political quietism of that decade. Most CAB workers worked too hard and for too little pay to have anything to spare for social research. As Baroness Barbara Wootton, the social scientist, reformer and activist told the House of Lords in February 1960, 'the social worker at the circumference can see things of this kind which are hidden from even the most imaginative draftsman at the centre of Her Majesty's Government, and the social worker can bring these shortcomings to the attention both of the public and of the appropriate Government Department.'⁸

Equally, those within the movement asked whether the CAB should take on new functions, such as counselling, in the sense of no longer just giving advice and information, but encouraging enquirers to resolve problems themselves. In 1960, J. H. Wallis published *Counselling and Social Welfare* for the general reader. He described the

⁷ MRC MSS. 292b 809.1, National CAB Committee, Memorandum on Housing Enquiry, 19 December 1962, 2.

⁸ Hansard, HL (Series 5) Vol. 221, col. 107 (17 February 1960).

type of people likely to visit the CAB who might benefit from such counselling. These were people who were in a 'highly emotional state' or 'overwrought emotionally'.⁹

The emergence of counselling as a social work technique was, according to Wallis, due to two developments. First, it was noticed in the Marriage Guidance movement that, rather than simply being interviewed and sent off to the appropriate professional person or organization, in some cases, given time and a willing pair of ears, some people could see their difficulty in a new light and begin to work things out for themselves. Second, it was suggested that, for a large proportion of problems, there was no professional person capable of tackling them. People who 'did not know what they wanted, did not know what to do, couldn't understand themselves or their partners, were faced with a situation that simply had no solution.'¹⁰ Counselling, for the CAB and others, meant dealing with such personal and emotional problems:

What has become increasingly certain and clear over the years is that there is an immense need for help of this very personal kind. People are often fed-up with being pushed around, with being treated as things, numbers, entities, units, hands - everything except what they are, people whose feelings are enormously important to them. There is a well recognizable grey look of despair that settles over people when they are treated with unfeeling administrative expertise, however, efficient, however (alas) essential.¹¹

Although there was, at first glance, a natural affinity between counselling techniques and CAB advice work, Marsh warned staff and leaders that solving human problems was difficult and there were people with specialized knowledge about human behaviour and social problems who might be better qualified for dealing with these problems through counselling.¹² He concluded that CAB workers should not stray too far from the original aims of the movement, and CAB should remain a general advice and information service.

⁹ Jack Harold Wallis, *Counselling and Social Welfare* (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1960), 4-5.

¹⁰ Ibid, 6.

¹¹ Ibid, 9-10.

¹² MRC MSS.292b.809.1, The National Standing Conference of Citizens Advice Bureaux : Reports of Adresses, October 1961, 11.

As well as laying greater weight on providing governments with the social facts concerning their policies, the attention of the CAB turned towards advocacy, albeit of a moderate nature. This advocacy work included accompanying appellants to tribunal hearings. This was seen as a great help: 'One can easily imagine the situation in which even before the most humane and kindly tribunal a person would be hopelessly tongue-tied and scared, and one can see the practical advantages of having someone there to hold his hand and help him along.'¹³ For Marsh, the problem lay in where this would end - could this function be limited to particular kinds of tribunals. A much more serious and potentially disastrous effect was the perceived loss of impartiality and independence and gaining a reputation for taking sides. The reputation for giving impartial advice was considered by Marsh to be 'the whole foundation upon which the work of the CAB movement has been established.'¹⁴

Aside from these debates about possible new functions for bureaux, the CAB continued to act as a source of information and guidance on a wide range of social problems. Particularly prominent among social problems were those concerning housing. Particularly noteworthy were the continuing problems of the housing shortage, especially in London, and the 'Rachman' style tactics of intimidation by private landlords, to force tenants out. Equally noteworthy were the numbers of landlords who were in the dark about the rapidly evolving housing legislation and asked the CAB for advice.

Another important rise in enquiries came in the area of consumer problems. Here, the CAB was confronted with a dilemma. The CAB National Council gave long and careful consideration to how best to address consumer complaints. Workers were uncertain whether to approach the relevant authorities with lists of offending companies and businesses, or to assist the individual enquirer by approaching the offending company, in a more mediatory role. Because the CAB saw its primary function as a social work organization, providing a service of advice and information to individuals, its leaders did not wish to enter the field of exposing the possible malpractices of companies or individuals in the sphere of consumption, except in very exceptional circumstances or

¹³ Ibid.

¹⁴ Ibid.

when the law demanded it. Two courses of action remained open: either the person suffering the wrong could be told the proper steps to take to expose it; or the malpractice, not the individual, could be reported to the appropriate authority so that steps could be taken to remedy the law and/or warn the public about its existence.¹⁵

Overall, not only concerning housing and consumer issues, CAB leaders argued, and many contemporaries agreed, that there was increased need for a service of information and advice midway between the officials and the professionals on the one hand and the person in the street on the other. The CAB continued to construct an image of the individual as lost in a sea of legislation and regulation. The presumption remained that the main obstacle was ignorance and that, given guidance and information, the individual would be able to act. Unsurprisingly, the CAB continued to grow in usefulness at the same time as the range and complexity of social legislation grew. The volume of legislation created through powers delegated by Parliament to executive authorities and bodies particularly continued to grow as it had done since 1945. The average number of Acts passed in each parliamentary session from 1960 to 1964 was 70, compared with 68 in 1956-1959 and 60 in 1951-1955. The figures for statutory instruments passed showed a similar increase: 2,429 in 1960-1964 up from 2,071 from 1951-1955.¹⁶

In addition to the increase in volume of legislation, the complexity of the welfare services continued to baffle ordinary people. A complex pattern of administration continued to affect the social services. The increase in the number and scope of the services run by local authorities led to the development of new specialized departments and sub-departments. In some instances, the administrative mechanism for implementing a particular legislative provision was dictated by the Act itself, or by regulations made under the Act. In others, particularly where permissive rather than

¹⁵ National Council of Social Service, *CAB Report 1964-1966 of Standing Conference of CAB* (London: National Council of Social Service, 1966).

¹⁶ House of Commons Library, *Research Paper 09/69* (2009), Table 2: pages of acts and statutory instruments, 1911 to 2006, 7.

mandatory powers were concerned, the local authority was free to decide the means whereby the service would be provided.¹⁷

Another example of increasing complexity was in the introduction of a Graduated Pensions scheme in 1959. Coming into effect in 1961, it attempted to provide a wage-related retirement pension while simultaneously acknowledging, and encouraging, the growth of employer and private pension schemes. Insured persons earning between £9 and £15 per week were required (unless they contracted out of the scheme) to pay an additional contribution of approximately 4 ½ per cent of that part of their weekly pay which lay between £9 and £15. This entitled them to a higher pension related to the additional contribution. The new pension constituted a partial breach in the principle of flat rate of benefits and contributions. Although improved pensions were badly needed, this effectively opened the door to more legislation and regulation and, more complexity in the social security system.

In addition to the increasing volume of legislation, the numbers of people making use of state benefits and services continued to rise. In the early 1960s, over 70 per cent of the weekly allowances paid out by the National Assistance Board were in respect of supplementation of National Insurance benefits, mainly pensions. Between 1.6 and 1.9 million people received weekly allowances.¹⁸ CAB leaders expressed made this point in a research paper to the newly formed law reform organization, JUSTICE set up by the International Commission of Jurists to study the possible use of such a system in the UK 1960:

...[A]n inevitable result of the political and social developments of this century is that, as well as there being far more about which people must know there is also a greater number of opportunities for them to come into collision with the state. ... [O]ne only has to think of the tens of thousands of decisions taken every day by central and local authorities, decisions on planning, on compulsory purchase, the decision to allocate or not to allocate a local authority house, decisions by the National Assistance Board, by the Ministry of National Insurance,

¹⁷ David C. Marsh (ed.), *An Introduction to the Study of Social Administration* (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1965), 220.

¹⁸ *Ibid.*, 50-51.

to see the innumerable points at which difficult and frustration can occur.¹⁹

New research suggested that individuals were often unaware of the benefits to which they were entitled. In 1961 Noel Timms conducted a pilot study into the public's knowledge of the social services and attitudes towards them. The study found that knowledge of the social services was confused and arbitrary. Knowledge of services for particular vulnerable groups was poor, e.g. 43 per cent of those surveyed did not know what services were available for the mentally ill. There was also a lack of knowledge over rights of appeal over benefit decisions. Only about 25 per cent were aware of the existence of specific procedures, but most believed that if people considered they were receiving insufficient benefit something could be done. There was also little knowledge or appreciation of the work of voluntary societies, apart from the Red Cross and the WVS.²⁰ The sociologist and consumer activist, Phyllis Wilmot, commented in 1962: 'It is often assumed that the Welfare state is nothing less than a vast featherbed on which anyone can collapse in comfort in time of trouble. The reality is very different since an elementary difficulty for many people is to find out just where or how to get the help they need.' Driving this difficulty was the fear of professionals and government that too much information and access might reveal just how limited were the welfare resources available.²¹

Public knowledge of tribunals was particularly poor, including the new mental health tribunals. At their peak, rent tribunals heard 15,000 cases a year. By 1960, all British tribunals heard over 100,000 cases a year.²² By the late 1950s it looked 'as if the courts might soon play a relatively unimportant role in English society. But during the sixties the tide turned and the courts became busier than they had ever been before.'²³ Following the report of the Jurists Commission, and discussions about the Scandinavian Ombudsman system, serious attention was paid in Britain towards

¹⁹ MRC MSS 292b 809.1 National CAB Committee, Notes for JUSTICE Education Research Trust Paper 4, 1 October 1960.10.01.

²⁰ Noel Timms, 'Knowledge, Opinion and the Social Services', *The Sociological Review*, Nov 1961, 361-365.

²¹ *The Guardian*, 24 August 1962, 8.

²² Brian Abel-Smith and Robert Stevens, *In Search of Justice: Society and the Legal System* (London: Allen Lane, The Penguin Press, 1968), 34.

²³ *Ibid.*

introducing an Ombudsman who could act as an intermediary between the state and the public, but in the public interest. The CAB maintained close links with the Justice group formed by the International Commission of Jurists to study the possible use of such a system in the UK. The *New Statesman* thought the CAB already performed this role and was a unique means of achieving justice and ensuring individuals got redress for their wrongs and pressing for reform where no such redress was forthcoming.²⁴

CAB headquarters immediately saw the value of an Ombudsman. The Secretary of the National CAB, Kathleen Oswald, commented to the Assistant Secretary, Joan Pridham that 'There might be something of value in it. Solicitors on the whole are unlikely to be of very much help to people.'²⁵ Yet, more broadly, CAB believed that there were already opportunities for people to contest administrative decisions in the courts, or through appeals machinery, but they did not know what facilities existed or how to use them. As the CAB put it:

Even so there remain grievances for which our present system offers no redress. An example drawn directly from bureau experience is the frustration, which arises from the unwillingness of some hospital officials to give reasonable and understandable explanations to patients and their relatives, and from the lack of independent machinery for considering complaints about treatment in hospital, other than the courts when legal action is appropriate.²⁶

Further compounding the problem, and increasing the work of the bureaux, was what Professor David Marsh described in 1964, as the 'changing spirit of the welfare state.' This was due to the growth of bureaucracy and administrative convenience. Marsh argued that the ideas that had inspired the welfare state were 'crystallizing, before our eyes, into a self-perpetuating vested interest, armed with printed forms and procedures.' Furthermore, there was little evidence that the training given to civil servants laid any emphasis on the art of oral communication, or that of human

²⁴ TNA AST 7/1745 *The New Statesman*, 29 May 1964.

²⁵ LMA AC 73/46/4 CAB 109 CAB and Ombudsman 1st file, Minute from KM Oswald to Miss Pridham, 10 December 1959.

²⁶ National Council of Social Service, *Citizens Advice Bureaux in the Contemporary Scene, Report of the National Committee April 1959 – September 1961* (London: National Council of Social Service, 1962), 13.

relations. 'Undoubtedly,' he argued, 'we have relied too much on the traditional methods of administration whose salient features were a machine-like inexorability, anonymity, exclusiveness, and separation from the rest of society.'²⁷

Alongside its universal and democratic aim of helping all groups in society, bureaux continued to focus on and assist vulnerable groups neglected by the state, including the mentally ill and their relatives. Two years after the Percy Report, the 1959 Mental Health Act sought to make the treatment of mental illness as similar to that of physical illness as possible. It recommended that hospital admissions for psychiatric reasons should be more informal, and local authorities made responsible for the social care of those who did not need in-patient medical treatment. The sudden and rapid release into the community of people suffering from mental health problems in the 1950s led to a rise in the number of visits to bureaux by mentally ill people themselves and their relatives. The CAB criticised the government for failing to implement the measures in stages and at too great a speed.²⁸ As the CAB noted: 'No additional provision has been made within the community to cope with the situation that has been created: long-term mentally sick people without homes or families are adrift in a world that is to them alien, unfriendly and frightening.'

Despite the increasing numbers neglected or abandoned by the welfare state, the Secretary of the National CAB Council, Kathleen Oswald, continued to stress the fact that CAB services were open to everybody. Following a report on bureaux activities in *The Observer* stressing the vital role bureaux played in helping social casualties such as the less educated and those with housing difficulties, she wrote to the paper: 'we are a service proud of the fact that we are use by all sections of the community - including *Observer* readers and not ... only by the very inexperienced.'²⁹ This tension between universalism and selectivity continued in attitudes towards social justice. Conflict arose where the CAB learned of a trader selling unsatisfactory goods, or an estate agent or landlord harassing a tenant. It was not always clear to the CAB whether it should expose the situation and act as 'the common informer'. Doing so would betray the

²⁷ David C. Marsh, *The Future of the Welfare State* (London: Penguin Books, 1964), 82.

²⁸ TNA MH 154/149, Paper for Royal College of Nursing Conference on Mental Health and the Community, National Citizens Advice Bureaux Committee, 6 September 1962.

²⁹ *The Observer*, 1 October 1961, 22.

universalism principle by favouring one party against another. By adopting an impartial attitude to conflict resolution, the CAB wished to remain acceptable to all potential users. By taking one side against another, CAB headquarters were concerned at the effects this might have on its reputation. Leaders asked whether it would continue to get cooperation from traders, officials and others if it was known to be willing to act in this way. Nevertheless, taking sides was unavoidable at times, and there is no evidence of traders objecting to the CAB exposing 'rogue' traders.

By the early 1960s, CAB were still crucial in providing legal advice, both through the statutory and the voluntary schemes and the supplementary legal advice schemes of the kind previously known as 'poor man's lawyer' services. In Liverpool and Manchester, the 'poor man's lawyer' centres had closed down due to the perception that legal aid was functioning adequately, while many bureaux in London maintained this service. Social workers and solicitors continued to provide information to headquarters about gaps in provision. These gaps included legal aid for families whose income excluded them from the statutory scheme, yet because of hire purchase commitments, high rents, or debt, it would be a financial hardship for them to consult a solicitor under the voluntary scheme or privately. Others had problems which required the help of both social workers and lawyers in close cooperation.

7.3. Structure and resources

Madeline Roofff argued that since 1948 broadly there had been little change in the organization and methods of voluntary organizations.³⁰ The continuity masked a significant amount of refinement, adaptation and adjustment. More substantial changes to structure and organizational capacity were limited by financial stringency. In the early 1960s, as it continued to grow in usefulness and as funds increased, the national headquarters of the CAB sought to place the service on a firmer footing. This led to an enlarged role for headquarters in the development and promotion of new bureaux. Consequently, more time and effort were devoted to training and infrastructure. There was simultaneously a growing sensitivity to criticisms of the CAB, especially of its public image and determination to improve the organization's efficiency and publicity. These tasks were made easier by the financial contributions of government and charitable trusts and foundations. Overall, the financial environment for voluntary organizations improved compared to the 1950s, as finances were placed on firmer footing, though this process was far from complete by the mid 1960s.

Although there was renewed emphasis on standards and training, as the service entered the 1960s, the CAB maintained its decentralized structure. In this way, it remained responsive to local needs. Headquarters influence, although growing in importance, remained limited and great emphasis was placed on local knowledge and responsiveness to social problems. The London office continued to provide the information services for individual bureaux, and continued to collect, collate and analyze statistics of broad trends from bureaux. The number of bureaux making statistical returns remained steady at approximately 280, a little over half. There was little growth in the rigour in statistical analysis to match the renewed emphasis placed on the CAB providing evidence to support its campaign and reform work. The CAB still vigorously resisted specialist social research. It continued to see its role as a generalist information and advice service. Headquarters also continued to provide operational support to individual bureaux, such as help in raising finance and in the recruitment of workers.

³⁰ Madeline Roofff, *A Hundred Years of Family Welfare: A study of the Family Welfare Association (formerly Charity Organization Society), 1869-1969* (London: Joseph, 1972), 190; see also *Voluntary Societies and Social Policy* (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1957).

At headquarters level there were a number of important changes in personnel during these years. Perhaps the most significant was the death in March 1964 of K. M. Oswald, secretary of the CAB since 1946. Joan Pridham, who had acted as assistant secretary for a number of years, took the position of Secretary, having joined headquarters after working as an organizer for a local bureau. Her promotion to the role of Secretary led to a more assertive approach to the bureaux's leadership. Pridham soon set about revising the conditions of registration and relating them to the new demands facing the CAB Service, making explicit the need for broad equality in standards of work throughout the country. In 1962, a review of the structure of the CAB Service took place with a view to improving communication with, and, participation by, bureaux in the affairs of the Service as a whole.³² There was also a change in the chairmanship of the National CAB Committee: Sir Leslie Farrer Brown retired and was replaced by Sir Harold Banwell.³³

Further structural and organizational readjustment was required in London due to local government reorganization in 1964-5. Consequently in the 1960s, there was a determined effort to strengthen the partnership and secure unification of the London bureaux to fit into the reformed London structure of local government which amalgamated boroughs into larger units. Particularly important in this respect was Sir Parker Morris, author of the influential 1961 report on Housing Standards, former clerk to Westminster Council and Chair of the London Regional Advisory CAB Committee.³⁴

It was still envisaged that each bureau should be a local self-governing unit responsible for its own finance and serving its own locality in its own way. As in the past, there continued to be exceptions and in large towns the bureaux functioned as one of the activities of the local Council of Social Service or voluntary casework agency, which was responsible for its organization and administration. The National Citizens' Advice Bureaux Council continued to take responsibility for the maintenance of standards in all bureaux and for answers to queries from the public, as well as to professional

³² National Council of Social Service, *CAB Report 1964-1966 of Standing Conference of CAB* (London: National Council of Social Service, 1966).

³³ Banwell, Sir Harold 1900-1982); Secretary of the Association of Municipal Corporations, President Lincoln Civic Trust.

³⁴ *Ministry of Housing and Local Government, Homes for today and tomorrow: a report of a Sub-committee of the Central Housing Advisory Committee* (London: HMSO, 1961).

organizations and central government departments for the quality of the work carried out.

The membership of the National Committee still consisted of representatives of bureaux nominated on a regional basis, together with others with an interest in CAB work and the social services generally, representatives of bureaux being always in a substantial majority. The chair and secretary were appointed by the National Council of Social Service, the parent body on which the movement continued to rely for the financing of headquarters services, and also for the support and backing which only the National Council, with its many years' experience in voluntary work, could give. Certain responsibilities for the general direction of the administrative work devolved upon the secretariat, which consisted of a small headquarters and field staff (all officers of the National Council) These included provision of an information service, promotion of new bureaux and the training of the workers. Most important also was the operation of a registration scheme whereby the National Committee determined minimum standards of efficiency which every bureau had to reach before being registered.

The management committee of an individual bureau was linked with the National Committee by representation on county and/or regional advisory committees. County committees were few in number and worked in close cooperation with rural community councils or county councils of social service, which often provided the secretariat. A link was maintained with other voluntary organizations and statutory agencies in the county. County and regional committees, which included representatives of the CAB in the area and other individuals and organizations contributing to the local service, met at regular intervals and each regional committee appointed a member to the National Committee. They held neither the direct responsibility nor the executive power of the local management committees, but provided a forum for the interchange of ideas and experiences, reviewed and reported on local coverage, and opportunities for promotional work and, in consultation with headquarters, arranged local training courses and conferences. Their main function continued to be serving as a channel through which the work of the National Committee and other regional committees could be brought to the notice of individual

bureaux and through which the national Committee could seek the views of bureaux in each region on matters of policy and learn about local conditions and trends in work. Alongside this administrative machinery relating the individual bureau to the national service, was the National Standing Conference of Citizens Advice Bureaux on which each bureau could be presented, together with members of the National CAB Committee and chairmen of regional and county committees. The conference met every second year to consider reports and resolutions from national and regional committees, to submit recommendations to the National Committee and for discussion of questions of general interest to the service.

The importance of training continued to be impressed on bureau organizers and workers at training days and residential schools. During 1960, over 1,000 bureau workers attended training in consumer advice work. Special training was arranged in London on the 1964 Housing Act, the Contracts of Employment Act and the 1964 Hire Purchase Act. In June 1960 a working group was set up by the London CAB regional Advisory Committee to consider the Younghusband Report and its implications for the CAB service. It recommended new standards of training to bring workers up to the level of trained social workers, providing the equivalent of two years full time training, enabling them to help with more complex problems. This new training was designed to reflect 'the very considerable amount of skill and knowledge required in CAB work.'³⁵ The group also recommended stricter conditions of acceptance for CAB workers. In future all candidates should be willing to undergo the training laid down of up to a year in duration. As well as attending lectures currently organized by the National Committee, it was envisaged that further courses, arranged through polytechnics or extra-mural facilities, would focus on developing skills in office organization, committee procedure, preparation of reports and the legal implications of social problems. However, the working group recognized that the funds required for such a reorganization of training would be huge and this would have to be factored into grant applications to local authorities. Needless to say, the money never materialized and training programmes continued to operate under financial constraints.

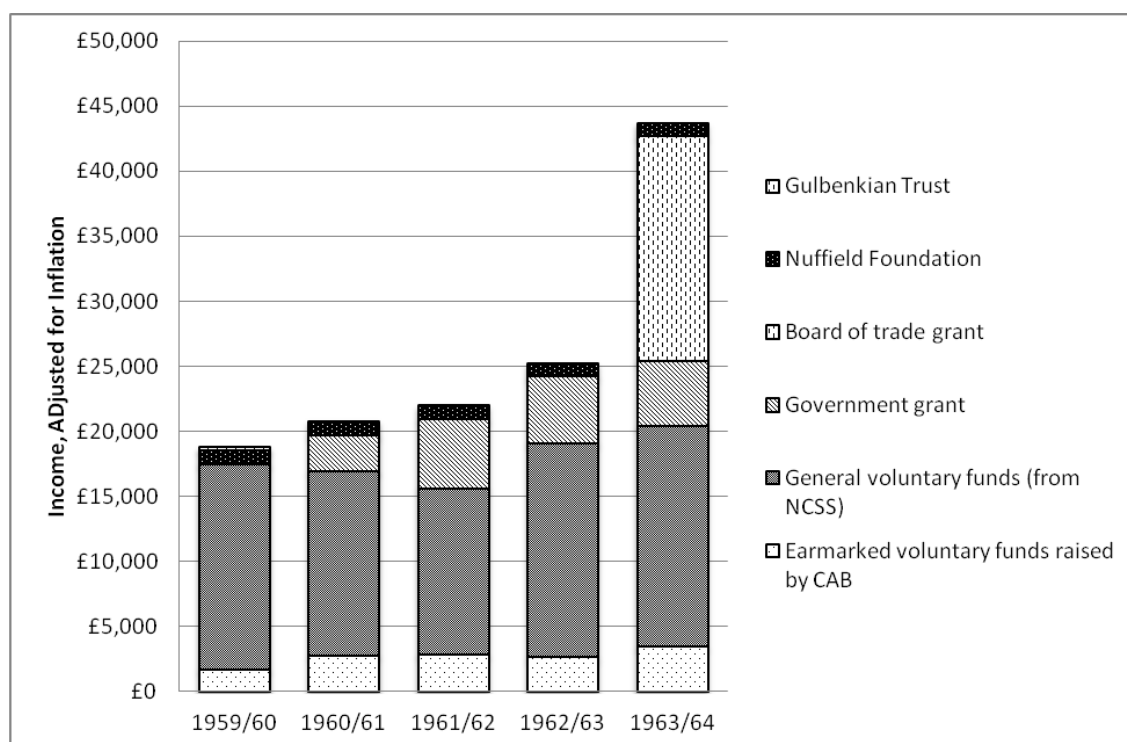
³⁵ MRC MSS 292b 809.1, London CAB Regional Advisory Committee, CAB Training and standards of work.

CAB in London, run by the Family Welfare Association, also continued to train social work students. During 1960-61, 32 students from the universities of London, Leicester, Liverpool and Southampton received practical training in CAB. There were also students from a new two year LCC training course for child welfare officers. Visits of observation to bureaux were arranged for probation officer trainees, Treasury welfare officers, student health visitors and overseas social workers, including social workers from the West Indies and Nigeria. Overseas social workers received practical training in bureaux before returning to their university studies in their home countries.³⁶

CAB resources, as seen from Figure 7, although improved by grants from government and foundations, remained scarce, although the resource environment continued to diversify. An initial grant of £2,500 was made by the Ministry of Health to the CAB in 1960 in recognition of the help given following the 1957 Rent Act. This was increased to £5,000 for each of the next three years. The Joseph Rowntree Foundation and the Calouste Gulbenkian Foundation both contributed £1,000 per year for three years starting in 1960 for the development of training programmes. A grant of £27,000 per year was made from 1963 by the Board of Trade as a result of the Molony Committee recommendations for an enlarged and improved CAB information service. The remaining expenditure of approximately £17,000 per year was met from the voluntary funds of the NCSS. In 1963 the annual contribution requested by individual bureaux towards the upkeep of headquarters increased from £5 to £7 per bureaux. This only raised a total of £1250 annually as it was still not compulsory for all bureaux to pay this contribution.

³⁶ The Family Welfare Association, *Annual Report 1960-61* (London: Family Welfare Association, 1961).

Figure 7 CAB Headquarters' Income (Adjusted for Inflation) 1959-64³⁷



Local resources continued to vary enormously. Generally, local authority grants rose. More localities recognized the need either for a salary or an honorarium for an organizer where the pressure of work was likely to be heavy. In London the total local authority grants for London Council of Social Service run CAB totalled £16,566 in 1960 rising to £22,858 by 1963-4. For the CAB run by the Family Welfare Association, grants from Metropolitan Boroughs stood at £13,735 in 1959-1960, rising to £32,000 in 1963-4, and £45,000 in 1964-65.³⁸

Despite the gradual rise in financial resources, geographical coverage continued to be patchy. The CAB entered the 1960s with around 416 bureaux, rising to 429 by 1964. In its own analysis CAB admitted that a population of 30,000 broadly represented the limit below which it was difficult to provide an efficient CAB. Of towns with populations over 30,000, 93 lacked a CAB in March 1962. Additionally, it was estimated that there were 25 predominantly rural counties in which the number of bureaux was very small. CAB advocated the establishment of bureaux in towns with populations above 20,000. There was a problem in some counties such as Yorkshire where there

³⁷ LMA AC 73/46/2 Finance, 1944-1959.

³⁸ The Family Welfare Association, *Annual Report 1963-64* (London: Family Welfare Association, 1964), 11.

were 19 towns with populations of between 20,000 to 100,000 with no bureau. Dorset and Shropshire had only one bureau each. The whole of Wales had only 24 bureaux and very few towns which the CAB was considered to able to maintain an adequate service.³⁹

Headquarters continued to emphasise the importance of obtaining suitable premises. This was all the more important given the high expectations of the social services among the public. The ordinary person, 'would feel something akin to insult if [they] had to look for the advice bureau in some remote side street and eventually found a near slum in which he had to make his needs known.'⁴⁰ However, the locations of bureaux continued to be poor. It was reported in *The Guardian* that 'The premises are usually discouraging, to say the least, with old wooden and canvas chairs, and passages for waiting.'⁴¹ However, such grim surroundings were not universal and, as in the past, efforts were made to move bureaux to new, more modern surroundings. As before, finances were a major constraint on freedom of action. One exception was Basingstoke, where a bureau was opened in modern premises erected especially for the purpose by the local authority. In 1960, Streatham MBC agreed to increase the grant to the local CAB to allow it to run on a full time basis. New premises were provided. During 1960-61, new bureaux were opened in Shoreditch and Greenwich, both supported financially by the local council.

The number of volunteers appears to have remained steady at about 3,000 though accurate numbers are hard to establish due to a lack of statistics.⁴² The social characteristics of the volunteers had changed slightly over the previous 25 years. They continued to be drawn largely from the professional and managerial middle classes. Individual volunteers continued to be mainly retired professional people, or housewives with grown up families. The rise of middle class married women's entry to the labour market, much of it part-time, was reflected in the increasing numbers of part time CAB workers. Whereas only 12 per cent of married women were in paid

³⁹ TNA BT 279/226 Memo to Board of Trade, March 1962.

⁴⁰ National Citizens' Advice Bureaux Committee, *Advising the Citizen (Revised edition)* (London: National Council of Social Service, 1961), 22.

⁴¹ *The Guardian*, 24 September 1961, 33.

⁴² *The Guardian*, 8 October 1962, 6.

employment in 1931, by 1965, about 45 per cent were employed.⁴³ The exact impact on the number of CAB volunteers is uncertain, due to the lack of historical records. Many volunteers combined volunteering with part-time work, or it filled gaps in the careers of women who took time out to raise their children.

Of the older married women, as before, many had been teachers, nurses or social workers before marriage. Retired military officers, civil servants and businessmen continued to volunteer and younger married women joined them, some with young children, taking a break from paid employment. Some critics of the service in the later 1960s and 1970s portrayed the service's workforce as consisting of worn out and ancient volunteers who had in most cases been volunteering since the Second World War.⁴⁴ In fact, in 1964, only 109 volunteers out of a total workforce of over 3,000 had been working since the war. However, few volunteers were under the age of 30 and, in spite of the valuable experience brought by retired professionals some of the leaders felt that the CAB movement was in need of new blood, and new volunteers. A disagreement broke out at headquarters over whether younger workers were better placed to deal with the normal problems of the young, such as employment, and also more suited to making the service more appealing and accessible. Many bureau organizers and volunteers continued to volunteer as members of local national insurance advisory committees and hospital management committees. This sort of activity was encouraged by headquarters, which viewed workers as uniquely placed for this type of work on account of their knowledge and experiencing of giving advice. It also helped to cement the bounds of statutory and voluntary cooperation in the social services.

By and large recruitment methods remained the same as they had always done. Word of mouth recruitment still existed in many CAB across the country. At the same time, more and more emphasis continued to be placed on recruiting people officially. London Bureaux, arising from their working group on training for CAB workers, recommended that recruitment should move to a professional basis, with

⁴³ Virginia A. Noble, *Inside the Welfare State: Foundations of Policy and Practice in post-war Britain* (London : Routledge, 2009), 4.

⁴⁴ David Bull, 'Action for Welfare Rights' in Fabian Society eds., *The Fifth Social Service: A Critical Analysis of the Seebohm Proposals* (London: Fabian Society, 1970).

advertisements and interviews for potential recruits. In 1962 a National CAB Committee circular was attached to an application form for prospective voluntary workers.⁴⁵ The handbook for CAB workers advised that applications for volunteers should be treated as if they were posts for paid appointments.⁴⁶

Approximately 70 per cent of CAB workers continued to volunteer part time. This was reflected in methods of recruitment. Following a conference in Harrogate in 1961 discussing policy on these issues, it was decided that the CAB operated best with the combination of part time voluntary workers and full time professionals. The combination of the wide experience and skills of the volunteer combined with the specialised knowledge and techniques of the professional continued to be advocated. The professional and the volunteer working side by side would, it was argued by headquarters, maintain the quality of the work.⁴⁷

Among volunteers themselves, headquarters and regional staff continued to espouse the values of professional social work. As the 1961 handbook put it, 'Gone are the days (if indeed they ever existed) when advice could be given by the light of nature.' Furthermore subjective feelings influenced by upbringing and experience, class prejudice, religious and political beliefs, should be put aside by the worker and his or her own feelings placed firmly in the background. It urged neutrality, tolerance, particularly to an enquirer whose story is 'charged with emotional and irrational material.'⁴⁸ CAB workers were urged not to overstep their neutral position and advocate for all cases. 'It may be tempting, on the strength of a few hard cases', the CAB guide suggested, 'to see all tenants as the victims of unjust landlords or all employees as oppressed by their employers.'⁴⁹ Suitability of personality and temperament and a high degree of intelligence were essential prerequisites. However, for the solution of complex modern problems, the Family Welfare Association believed

⁴⁵ Lancashire Records Office (LRO), DDX 2302, Minutes of CAB Regional Advisory Committee 12 July 1962.

⁴⁶ National Citizens' Advice Bureaux Committee, *Advising the Citizen (Revised edition)* (London: National Council of Social Service, 1961), 19.

⁴⁷ TNA AST 7/1745 Report of CAB 1962-1964, 6.

⁴⁸ National Citizens' Advice Bureaux Committee, *Advising the Citizen (Revised edition)* (London: National Council of Social Service, 1961), 33.

⁴⁹ *Ibid.* 34.

that people should be trained. Therefore they looked at those with a background in the social sciences and with social science qualifications and relevant experience.

Tensions were expressed between the competing characteristics of 'ordinariness' and 'professionalism'. CAB workers were urged to 'work to professional standards, yet not act as professionals; they must help their enquirers to understand legislation, but not give legal advice; they must help people in trouble to understand and solve, or live with, their problems, but not embark on family casework; their offices must be highly efficient, but still retain an informal atmosphere; they must undertake training and yet accept the limitations of their knowledge.'⁵⁰ CAB still continued to critique professionalism arguing that it had the potential to be too narrow and insensitive to the impact of policy and to the needs of ordinary people and the need for greater coordination. Yet this view of professionalism also acknowledged the importance of professional standards, and the recognition that more training could improve judgment and administrative skill.

⁵⁰ TNA AST 7/1745 Report of CAB 1962-1964, 3.

7.4. External relations

The CAB continued to cooperate with external organizations, such as the Law Society and the social work profession, and continued to cooperate with the state in pursuit of its aims. Its confidence in dealing with central government and local authorities grew. Yet its publicity remained low key and CAB leaders still refrained from drawing too much attention to its work. The CAB was only partially successful in re-shaping its image in the eyes of others. Criticisms of the CAB and its methods emerged in the early 1960s, together with criticisms of the welfare state. However, both major political parties continued to cooperate with CAB and political criticism was limited to certain geographical areas, namely the North West and areas of South Wales, historically hostile to middle class voluntary organizations. Those outside the movement still remained positive about the CAB's work and efficiency. Many positive reports came from journalists and left-leaning media sources. In *The Guardian*, Jean Soward wrote an extremely complimentary piece in October 1962.⁵¹ Liz Gundrey contributed a favourable article to the *Daily Herald* entitled, 'Britain's Free Advice Service'.⁵² The *New Statesman* published a complimentary article in May 1964.⁵³

Professional social workers were also positive about CAB work and continued to work with it. But there were continuing tensions in this relationship, particularly between the information and the family casework roles. There was continuing concern among the organizations' leadership that some professional social workers still did not understand the function of CAB: namely to act as social counsellors not as social workers. One area of cooperation with professional social workers was in the field of mental health. In one unnamed town, the CAB organizer noted that doctors and psychiatric social workers from the local hospital frequently asked her to visit recently discharged patients to help deal with social problems, such as hire purchase agreements, that might delay recovery. Relations were clouded by the continuing uncertainty as to what constituted a social worker.⁵⁴ The relationship between volunteers and social workers remained complex. The CAB could and did meet

⁵¹ *The Guardian*, 8 October 1962, 6.

⁵² *The Daily Herald* 4 September 1962

⁵³ *The New Statesman*, 29 May 1964

⁵⁴ TNA MH 154/149, Paper for Royal College of Nursing Conference on Mental Health and the Community, National Citizens Advice Bureaux Committee, 6 September 1962.

resistance from organizations that accused it of meddling, and from statutory social service departments of local government. This seemed to happen where professional boundaries were thought to have been overstepped or infringed. The CAB's relationship with social work was generally good, though tensions between professional and amateur status sometimes erupted into hostility.

The legal profession continued to express a largely positive view of the CAB, and their work. This support was probably based on the continuing importance of the bureaux as sorting houses, or gateways, to accessing legal services. This cooperation was achieved by many bureaux. People who felt timid about visiting solicitors more readily accepted of CAB lawyers as a first step. These cases were often referred on to a solicitor acting under one of the legal advice schemes. A number of cases concerned claims for very small amounts of money, which were not worth pursuing in view of the charge the solicitor would make. CAB also provided a useful opportunity for solicitors who had little other opportunity to become acquainted with social insurance schemes, and were prepared to do voluntary work outside their office hours, to gain experience in social welfare legislation. As the National Council of CAB commented in 1962:

...It is a tradition of the legal profession to do this kind of voluntary work and many people would regret the ending of opportunities for this kind of services; many offers are still received and the experience of working in conjunction with a social service agency in helping "ordinary people with ordinary problems" is welcomed by many members of the profession.⁵⁵

Such lawyers were titled 'honorary legal advisers', and would usually help the local committee on matters such as adoption of charitable status and registration of the bureau with the Charity Commission and other legal questions connected with management, insurance policies etc. Others would help bureau workers to identify the legal elements within cases brought to them by the public. It was not always apparent to those bringing their problems to the bureaux that the law had been breached, particularly concerning consumer and housing problems.

However, some solicitors argued that clients who used to call on their services now went to the Citizens Advice Bureaux where the same service was offered free of

⁵⁵ LMA ACC 1762/36/6 NCABC 'Legal Advice' July 1962

charge.⁵⁶ Brian Abel-Smith's research on the legal profession in the 1960s found that Bureaux filtered out problems with a legal component and that the best of their workers were more qualified to give and more knowledgeable in giving, 'social advice' than solicitors: 'Thus the Bureaux help to conserve the time of lawyers for the work which only they can do. Nor are all solicitors unappreciative of the bureaux, which according to one solicitor have "a vocation for tasks that make solicitors groan."' ⁵⁷ CAB workers complained bitterly that they could not persuade local solicitors to interest themselves in the minor, but urgent, domestic and landlord and tenant problems of poorer citizens. Audrey Harvey, a CAB worker in the East End of London was particularly scathing of the legal profession, arguing that lawyers were unable to answer simple questions about social rights.⁵⁸ Yet a number of solicitors and barristers were prepared to attend weekly CAB sessions, under a 'gentleman's agreement' that allowed people to pay what they could afford.

The CAB continued to espouse non-partisan and non-sectarian values and accordingly continued to attract cross-party support and appreciation. The Chancellor, RAB Butler, wrote in the 1961 edition of *Advising the Citizen*, the handbook for CAB workers and organizers:

Modern society is inevitably complex; and in its complexity the ordinary citizen, especially when he is in trouble or difficulty, often finds himself at a loss to know what is the best thing to do. The Citizens' Advice Bureaux have shown over the years how much they can help him – either with advice about his problems, or about the right agency to which he should apply for guidance or assistance in tackling them.⁵⁹

Its relations with the political parties were influenced by the growing recognition of the need for information and advice services during the early 1960s. Writing on behalf of the Liberal Party, in the *The Unservile State*, Iris Capell noted that a person could get a

⁵⁶ Brian Abel-Smith and Robert Stevens, *In Search of Justice: Society and the Legal System* (London: Allen Lane, The Penguin Press, 1968) 160.

⁵⁷ *Ibid.*, 162.

⁵⁸ British Library of Political and Economic Science, HARVEY/1, 'Drafts for a CAB piece', undated.

⁵⁹ National Citizens' Advice Bureaux Committee, *Advising the Citizen (Revised edition)* (London: National Council of Social Service, 1961), 4.

'sympathetic hearing, sound legal and practical advice, and an assurance that if his complaint is justified something can and will be done about it,' at the local bureaux. She commented, however, that the voluntary nature of the work was a limitation. Such assistance, she noted, was only possible if there happened to be a competent, fully staffed bureau in the locality. CAB work was hampered by insufficiency of bureaux and of money to train and pay staff.⁶⁰ On the left, among Labour intellectuals, there was a growing emphasis on individual freedom, including of citizens as consumers, which required greater choice, information and advice on rights.⁶¹ In this context the importance of voluntary organizations such as the CAB was stressed. Brian Abel-Smith wrote, 'New specific services are needed on a nation-wide basis to explain to people the choices available to them and to acquaint them with some of the considerations which they need to take into account. [...] There are some things that people can decide if they are simply given the facts. In other decisions very careful counselling is needed.'⁶²

The Labour movement continued to support CAB. The TUC continue to endorse the CAB, recognizing its importance as a source of information and advice complementing and supplementing the advice services provided by trade unions. Harold Wilson made a promotional visit to the local bureau in Eccles, Lancashire in the early 1960s.⁶³ Labour women were happy to support bureaux as part of their work for greater consumer protection. C. Tulip of the Hartlepool Labour Party argued that the solution to bad quality goods was to set up centres controlled by local authorities or by the Citizens' Advice Bureau.⁶⁴ Meanwhile, some hostility remained, for example in Reading, the

⁶⁰ Iris Capell, *The Aggrieved Citizen* (London: Liberal Publication Dept., for the Unserved State Group, 1963), 14.

⁶¹ Michael Young, *Chipped White Cups of Dover: A discussion of the possibility of a new progressive party* (London: Unit 2, 1960). See also Brian Abel-Smith, writing in 1964: 'Thus, if we are going to increase the range of choice within the social services, we have to get rid of rationing in every field where this is practicable. In some fields it is possible to do this by giving people the money with which to exercise sovereignty over public services, while leaving a private sector – preferably run by voluntary organizations – to mop up any excess demand left by the restrictionism of public authorities. Brian Abel-Smith, *Freedom and the Welfare state*, (London: Fabian Society, 1964) 14.

⁶² Brian Abel-Smith, *Freedom and the Welfare state*, (London: Fabian Society, 1964), 14.

⁶³ LRO DDX 2302, Minutes of CAB Regional Advisory Committee 19 March 1963.

⁶⁴ *The Guardian* 10 April 1959, 5.

CAB accepted that it had to do more to win over Labour-controlled local councils.⁶⁵ Pridham wrote, 'I am greatly concerned about the number of places in the North where promotional work has been completely obstructed by opposition from the Labour Party.'⁶⁶

In general, relations with MPs were good, though in 1960 the National CAB Council admitted that not all Members of Parliament were aware of the help bureaux could give with many of the problems they dealt with.⁶⁷ Further introspection was stimulated by comments by Christopher Mayhew, Labour MP for Woolwich East, to the Woolwich Council of Social Service that more action should be taken to bring the work of bureaux to the notice of MPs.⁶⁸

Critics of the CAB argued that it was too old fashioned and impartial to be an effective political organization and the state and local authorities should supply information as a matter of course, not relying on a voluntary organization such as the CAB. In a 1963 article in *New Society*, Isobel Allen, a writer on social policy and healthcare, criticised the middle class image of the organization, suggesting that the service was old fashioned and out of touch with modern life. She argued that too many CAB were attempting case work. She criticised the organization's reliance on volunteers.⁶⁹ The article sparked a stiff response from the Information Officer of the NCSS, David Hobman, who defended the continuing use of volunteers as a strength and resisted the impression of 'archaic philanthropy', that Allen had painted. Rather, he argued, the CAB had 'evolved out of its time' and 'is one manifestation of the policy of community care upon which a welfare society depends.'⁷⁰

Certainly publicity continued to be a weakness of the CAB during the early 1960s. Its publicity tended to be old fashioned and limited to the occasional poster or flyer. Where publicity was lacking, word of mouth continued to be the main means of raising

⁶⁵ LMA AC 73/46/ 1 Cab/Ctte/1 Chairman, Letter from K. M. Oswald to G. Banwell, 26 August 1963.

⁶⁶ LMA AC 73/46/ 1 Cab/Ctte/1 Chairman, Letter V. Weeks to J. Pridham 4 November 1959, 1.

⁶⁷ MRC MSS.292B/809.1/2 Minutes of the National CAB Committee 23 June 1960, 6.

⁶⁸ Ibid.

⁶⁹ *New Society* 27, 4 April 1962, 8.

⁷⁰ *New Society*, 29, 18 April 1963.

awareness. This was by no means unsuccessful. In March 1965 National Opinion Polls conducted a survey for the Consumer Council into public awareness of the Citizens' Advice Bureaux in Sheffield, Birmingham, Derby, Leeds and Nottingham. Around three quarters of those asked had heard of the CAB and one in ten had used one. Of those using the service, just over one quarter had consulted the bureaux over a housing problem, one-fifth over a family, personal or matrimonial problem. Those in class AB had used the service mostly for local information about the town or locality. Of those who had been to a CAB, the ratio of men to women using the service was 40 to 60. Over half of users were aged between 35-54, a quarter were 16-34 and the rest over 55. Use by class was weighted heavily towards social class DE (43 per cent), C2 (34 per cent), along with C1 (19 per cent) and lastly, AB (4 per cent).⁷¹

CAB received many positive accounts in friendly newspapers, for example the *Guardian*, and other sources. Reports of local CAB committees continued to comment that more publicity was needed. Those, such as Rosalind Brooke examining the service in the 1960s criticised it for failing to make itself better known to its users and potential users. She argued that the CAB needed to decide whether to retain its present emphasis on voluntary workers. She also argued that national CAB policy, with its emphasis on impartiality and 'non-campaigning', might inhibit recognition of the need for CAB and reduce sensitivity to the needs of their clients.⁷² These and other similar criticisms were voiced when a team of American social workers came to study the CAB in the mid 1960s.⁷³ Slides shown on cinema screens and posters continued to be the main means of publicity. However, new techniques were being pioneered by certain bureaux. Toynbee Hall issued branded car stickers to its helpers.⁷⁴ In Kendal, in 1960, the Guild of Service and CAB sought a grant from headquarters to advance publicity in the county. Posters were distributed, and bookmarks printed in public libraries. This proved useful in bringing in enquiries from rural parts of the county. Publicity was achieved through letters to newspapers and articles in magazines aimed at potential

⁷¹ TNA AJ 8/3 Public awareness of Citizens Advice Bureaux, National Opinion Polls Ltd., 1965

⁷² Rosalind Brooke, 'Civic Rights and Social Services', *The Political Quarterly*, 40/1 (1969), 90-102, 96.

⁷³ See Alfred J. Kahn, *Neighbourhood Information Centres: A Study and some proposals* (NY: Columbia University School of Social Work, 1966).

⁷⁴ LMA ACC 2486 Toynbee Minutes of Annual General Meeting, 13 May 1964.

users.⁷⁵ CAB seemed reluctant to seek publicity among key opinion formers in the 1960s. In October 1960 the National CAB Committee agreed to wind up its publicity sub-committee, following the recommendation of its Chair, who suggested that the continued existence of the sub-committee was not justified since public relations questions had normally to be handled by headquarters officers and could not await a committee decision.⁷⁶ The CAB continued to use the BBC to broadcast and publicise itself through the 'Can I Help You', series on the Home Service. Following a talk on the Home Service in January 1960 letters were received from enquirers at headquarters.⁷⁷ In 1963 the Family Welfare Association produced a colour documentary film depicting the work of its bureaux.⁷⁸

The Chief Librarian of Luton (where the CAB was under the aegis of the Library committee) wrote to headquarters expressing regret at the closure of several bureaux in the Eastern region and asking whether enough attention was being given to publicity for the service.⁷⁹ The Chairman of the NCABC felt that national press publicity was satisfactory; that it was unlikely the service could get more attention at the present time; and that good liaison between individual bureaux and the local press was of first importance. The value of displays in public libraries and the willingness of librarians to assist were also mentioned. It was felt that there was no connection between the closure of the bureaux and lack of local publicity. Promotional work relied on direct approaches to the town clerks of local authorities. This was done through travelling and regional officers addressing local meetings of Councils of Social Services and Standing Conferences of Women's Organizations.

Publicity aside, gradually, the government began to show more favour towards the CAB. One of the biggest supporters continued to be Evelyn Sharp, Permanent Secretary at the Ministry of Housing and Local Government (MHLG). She told another

⁷⁵ See for example the article written by Oswald in the Rotary International August 1962 edition. Also Municipal Review article August 1960, 'The CAB and the Community.' By G. Banwell

⁷⁶ MSS.292B/809.1/2 Minutes of the National CAB Committee 19 Oct 1960

⁷⁷ MSS.292B/809.1/2 Minutes of the National CAB Committee 23 Jan 1961,7.

⁷⁸ See the FWA Annual Report for 1963-4,10 Unfortunately I was not able to locate a copy of this film.

⁷⁹ MSS.292B/809.1/2 Minutes of the National CAB Committee 16 November.

official in the department: 'I do not need to tell you the value of the Citizens Advice Bureau. If we had not got them we should have to invent them.'⁸⁰ It seems that the work of the bureaux, to a certain degree, spoke for itself. In August 1963 a circular letter from the Board of Trade to local authorities commended the CAB service. Within four months, 446 local authorities responded to the circular seeking further information. In June 1964, the MHLG wrote to the clerks of local authorities of the largest towns expressing the Minister's concern that the public needed access to advice on housing matters and his recognition of the service provided by the CAB. In 1963 the CAB was invited to take part in the Milner Holland committee on housing, set up in the wake of the Rachman scandal and headed by Sir Milner Holland, CBE, QC. The CAB travelling officer M. J. Wood was an active member of the Committee. More generally, the Conservative government's plans for the social services and increases in Community Care anticipated an increasing supply of voluntary social workers.⁸¹

The Conservative government continued to seek information on specific matters relating to housing policy. In 1962 the MHLG sought information about whether landlords and tenants understood that four weeks' notice to quit was obligatory on both sides, about the evasion by landlords of the responsibility to provide a rent book and the responsibilities of landlords for repairs and decorations to properties.⁸² At the same time the Treasury was nervous about giving too much financial aid to the NCSS for CAB work. They argued that to give it a general grant in aid, bringing its government assistance up to half of its total expenditure, would undermine its

80 TNA HLG 102/390 CAB revival of grant, 1958-61 letter from E. Sharpe ' Evelyn Sharp was a woman in Whitehall's top ranks as permanent secretary of the Ministry of Housing and Local Government 1955-66. She had a 40-year-long career in the civil service (which she joined in 1926, only the second year in which the examination for the administrative class was open to women). She was widely recognised as one of the most formidable civil servants of her day, her unique specialist knowledge of the field of local government, housing and planning (in which she spent virtually her whole career), and her forthright manner and tough-minded approach marking her out. All her life she believed passionately in local government and was its champion inside Whitehall; after her retirement from the civil service she was one of the dominant figures on the Redcliffe-Maud Royal Commission on Local Government (1966-69). See. Kevin Theakston, *Contemporary Record* 7/1, 1993, 132-148.

81 Health and Welfare: The Development of Community Care: Plans for the Health and Welfare Services of the local authorities in England and Wales (1962-63: Cmnd. 1973).

82 TNA T 224/588 Letter A. H. M. Mitchell , to W Lloyd-Davies, 16 October 1961.

voluntary character, frighten off voluntary subscribers, and make the Trusts unwilling to support a quasi-government body: 'In short, the more the government gives, the greater the risk of being left with the baby entirely on its doorstep.'⁸³

The stress on the importance of the independence of the CAB vis-à-vis government returned to the fore during discussions over its relationship with the Consumer Council, created in March 1963. The Molony Committee, appointed to consider measures 'desirable for the further protection of the consuming public', regarded the work of the CAB as highly beneficial.⁸⁴ It considered it important that consumers with difficulties should be able to unburden themselves to a sympathetic ear and receive independent and realistic advice. Others with serious grievances would be helped if their case was presented for them with forceful clarity, which they could not personally command. It was suggested that bureaux should not enter into disputes that threatened to require skilled legal guidance. But they could direct the inquirer to appropriate advice because they kept lists of solicitors on the voluntary and statutory Legal Advice Panels and forms of application for advice under the statutory scheme.⁸⁵

The initial enthusiasm for the new Consumer Council turned to disappointment when the CAB pointed out that the independence and the varying constitutions of the bureaux precluded the National Committee from giving the formal assurance sought by the Consumer Council that bureaux would undertake additional responsibilities

⁸³ TNA T 224/588 NCSS grants in aid 1960-62, Minute from Mrs P.M. Rossiter, to Mr J.A.C. Roberston SS Division Treasury, 12 December 1960.

⁸⁴ *Final Report of the Committee on Consumer Protection* (1961-62 Cmnd. 1781). The Committee recommended the appointment of a Consumer Council made up of part time independent members. It had no regulation making or law enforcement functions, nor did it deal with individual complaints, though according to the *Modern Law Review*, 'its existence would, it is hoped, inspire a good deal of correspondence.' Its function was to collect information about consumer problems, to consider what action was required, and to promote that action by advising the consumer and all other receptive parties, persuading manufactures and distributors, pressing governments when statutory action was needed and generally by speaking authoritatively on behalf of the consumer. See Aubrey L. Diamond, *The Modern Law Review*, 26/1 (1963), 66-75. The NCAB was not happy about the relative weakness of the new Consumer Council, particularly its inability to deal with complaints.

⁸⁵ 'It is plain that Citizens' Advice Bureaux have already developed an advisory and informative service of greater consumer interest and that they are closely in touch with consumer problems in a way unequalled by another organization.' *Final Report of the Committee on Consumer Protection* (1961-62 Cmnd. 1781), 161.

and perform them according to a designated routine. It was also emphasised that the CAB service had achieved social acceptance only because it was conducted in a spirit of impartiality and it would be averse to appearing to become closely identified with any specific group of complainants, such as consumers. CAB also made the formidable point that a number of consumer complaints could only be assessed with technical assistance, especially where the quality of goods was concerned; and that the cost of obtaining independent laboratory reports or analysis was too high for complainants to consider. In this respect, the recommendations in the Molony Report fell short of the proposals advanced by the National Committee of CAB in aid of the consumer. The CAB itself had imagined that the new Consumer Council would be have more legal 'bite' and would be able to resolve individual complaints, paying for technical tests where necessary.

The CAB still did not try to influence government policy directly but by using a gradualist approach through the submission of evidence to committees. A list of CAB submissions in 1963-64 included: papers to the Board of Trade on the reform of Hire Purchase law, to the Ministry of Housing and Local Government on housing, and evidence on the jury service to the Home Office. The CAB continued to advise the government on problems affecting the public. Discussions with the Council of Tribunals, through correspondence and by telephone, made the Council aware of official language not understood by the public concerning the work of tribunals, and of any local practices in the conduct of tribunals which were thought to undermine its informal atmosphere. An important example was the people's unawareness for the need for all three tribunal members to be present if a decision was to be made.

The CAB continued to apply pressure through supplying information and research on issues relating to housing. For a fixed period following the 1957 Rent Act, landlords wanting to raise the rent of their properties could do so only by offering a three-year lease. The Ministry of Housing and Local Government asked CAB to keep details of enquiries received in connection with the termination of three-year tenancy agreements signed in 1957. During one month in 1960, 146 such enquiries were received in London bureaux. Of these, seventy-nine had not been offered a renewal and a further sixty had been offered renewal at an increased rent. Of these, forty-three had either refused or

were likely to refuse due to their inability to afford the increase. In most of these cases it was discovered that the landlord wished to sell the house. The lowest rent increases were between seventeen and a half to twenty per cent, the median, thirty-three to thirty-nine per cent and some of the highest were over one 100 per cent. During its collaboration with the previously mentioned Milner-Holland Committee from 1962 to 1963, investigating housing in Greater London, questionnaires were sent to bureaux in the London area asking for information and evidence of abuses under housing legislation. A survey of abuses being inflicted on people in London was also carried out by a number of bureaux between February and April 1964.⁸⁶

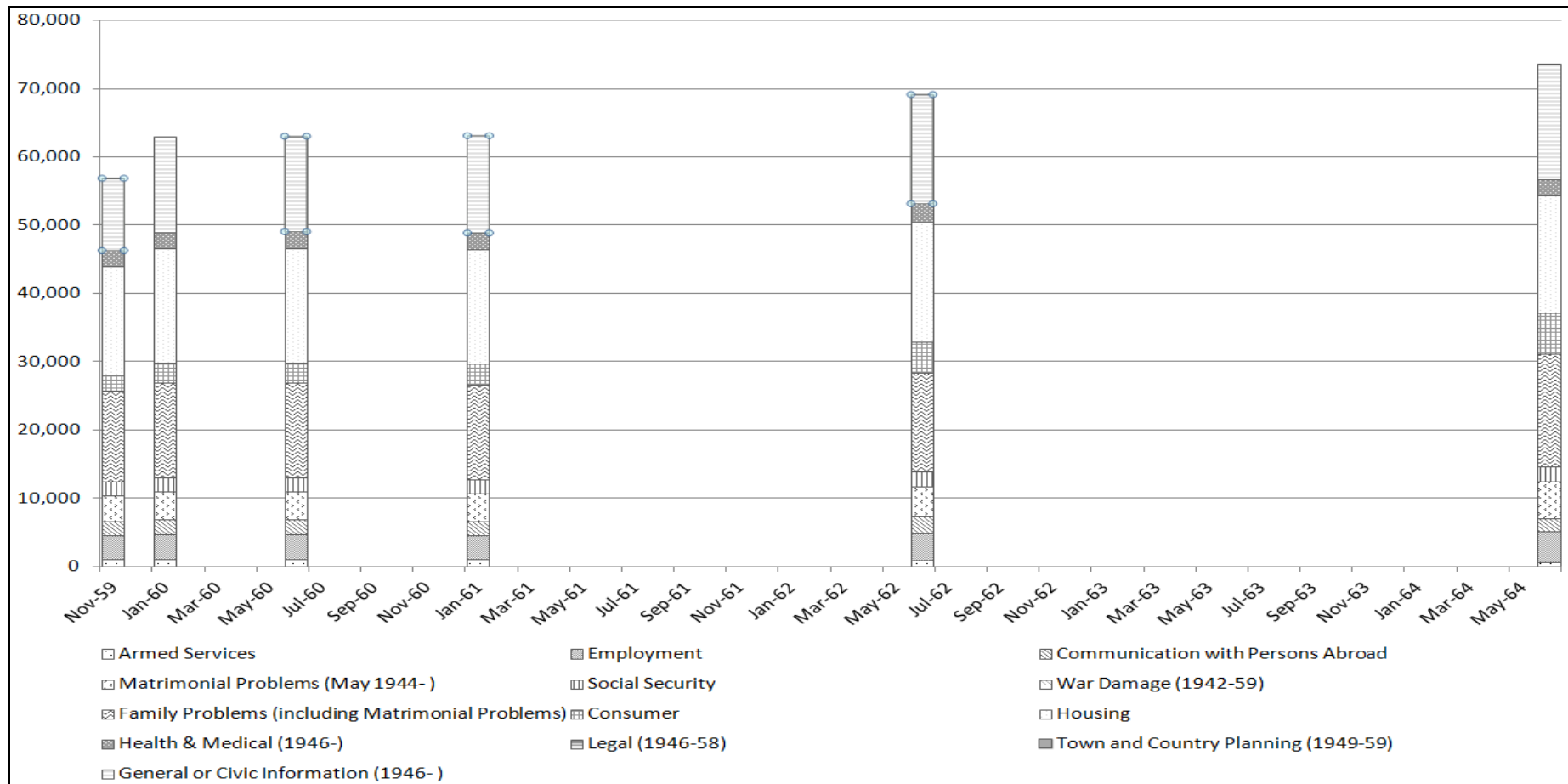
These housing developments affected people on fixed incomes, particularly older people. The National Assistance Board stated that in cases where housing allowances were being paid as part of National Assistance, rent allowance increases would be considered on a case by case basis. In some instances it was admitted that they were unlikely to consider it reasonable to meet increases from public funds. The CAB found that the policies of local authorities towards re-housing Rent Act eviction cases varied enormously. Some asked to be given names of tenants, as in Wembley. But other local authorities had virtually closed their lists for years, because there was practically no prospect of these tenants being re-housed.

⁸⁶ *Report of the Committee on Housing in Greater London* (1965: Cmd. 2605), 165-66.

7.5. Outcomes of CAB work

The CAB continued to make a significant contribution towards protecting and consolidating the rights of individuals as well as monitoring the impact of new social legislation. It did so through making people aware of their legal and welfare rights and by feeding back information to try to shape future government legislation. In this section, the outcomes of CAB work during this period for its volunteers, for clients and for government are considered and assessed in the light of the constraints facing the organization. As before, the CAB provided information for the vulnerable and confused and for those who had fallen through the gaps in the welfare state. Some people exhibited continued distrust for professional and expert advice and guidance, but bureaux workers assisted those who were fearful of approaching professionals and continued to provide a vital lay complement to the workings of bureaucracy. The overall outcome of much CAB work was greater understanding of individual legal and welfare rights and the corresponding obligations of citizenship. Also, as Figure 8 shows the CAB's work highlighted the continuing importance of voluntary social service to the welfare state.

Figure 8 Number and proportion of enquiries, November 1959 to June 1964¹



¹ LMA AC 73/46/66; 67; 68; 69; 70; Statistical Abstracts, 1942-59. National Citizens Advice Bureaux Council Annual Reports, 1959-1964. Unfortunately there is no run of continuous data between 1959 and 1964.

In 1966, American social workers, interested in the potential for a similar organization in the US, studied the CAB. One observer was struck by the service: 'they are truly intermediaries between the individual and the statutes and bureaucracies of a social welfare-orientated state'.¹ During these years, the CAB continued to have a significant impact on the lives of those whom it helped. It empowered them to confront authority and to challenge decisions where these were based on false information. The organization made a significant contribution to the debates over consumer politics and to the growing evidence that the welfare state was failing in certain key areas.

The public generally accepted the services of the CAB, where these were known. As the same American observers commented in 1966, 'while not as much a part of the locality as the post office, the CAB is almost taken for granted in many places. The public knows about it. It seems to be a useful and accepted urban amenity.'² Perhaps the greatest evidence of this was the continuing increase in the numbers of people using the bureaux. This signalled acceptance of a sort, but it did not provide clear evidence of whether the bureaux, or its values, were totally accepted. Most people using a bureau clearly found it useful, based on the letters of thanks that made their way to bureaux and to individual workers. Yet little research was conducted to assess satisfaction with bureaux services until the late 1960s. There is evidence that not all social classes, despite what some organizers within the service believed, were using bureaux. This reflecting the ability of the more prosperous and better educated to access other resources, such as private solicitors. Most users were drawn from the lower middle and working classes, but no specific data is available for this period. It was not possible therefore to say how many of the poorest reached the bureau, though in certain areas, e.g. in the East End of London, they made up the majority of cases.

The outcomes for volunteers were also important. The CAB continued to promote the concept of responsible and active citizenship, aiming to encourage people to add their voices to discussions of social and political issues affecting everyday lives. For some,

¹ Alfred J. Kahn, *Neighbourhood Information Centres: A Study and some proposals* (NY: Columbia University School of Social Work, 1966), 17.

² *Ibid.*, 37.

the outcome was little more than an opportunity for some activity on one or two hours a week. For others, there was an opportunity to connect with political activity, become aware of social problems and to provide an outlet for political activity of a non party political type. For most volunteers, the challenging nature of the work was itself in an attraction.³ The quality of the work, and, similarly, the volunteers' attitudes towards the people they helped continued to vary from place to place. In 1965, Dennis Marsden, researching into the problems of lone mothers, found that many mothers had applied for help from various CAB around the country, and had encountered differing levels of assistance. One volunteer, the organizer of Huddersfield bureau (who had been in charge since the War), was quoted as telling one woman who had received numerous beatings from her husband to return to him, for 'men are such funny creatures'.⁴ This was the same organizer who featured in the diary of a Mass Observer, twenty three years earlier. In March 1942, a Mass Observation diarist had approached the Huddersfield bureau to deal with a dispute over the address of a Red Cross message sent to, but returned undelivered, from occupied France. The diarist recalled that, on arrival, she found: 'a fur-coated 'lady' there who treated me most discourteously – rather like an ill-bred mistress talking to her servant.' She went on: 'I don't like that kind of woman and I'm sure it is not the right sort to have in a CAB where people come who require sympathetic understanding. I certainly wouldn't like to go there with my troubles.'⁵

Examples of such insensitivity, thankfully, were rare. There were many more notable examples of people being helped. For Audrey Harvey, a volunteer in the East Poplar bureau, East London, voluntary work for the CAB provided an opportunity to engage in non-party political activism. In February 1960, Harvey, published the Fabian pamphlet: *Casualties of the Welfare State*. She was born in 1912 in London, attended boarding school and read English at Oxford. While there she spent some time in a hostel set up by Dick Sheppard, dean of Canterbury and founder of the Peace Pledge

³ *The Birmingham Post*, 16 May 1961.

⁴ David Marsden, *Mothers Alone* (London: Penguin, 1969), 192.

⁵ MO Sussex, Diarist 5333, 3 March 1942.

Union, in her words, 'helping resting actors to dispense burnt lentil soup.'⁶ She spent the Second World War in occupations consistent with her pacifist convictions, working on the editorial staff of Andre Deutsch, the publisher, in a shop, a hospital and a factory. During the War she also worked as a temporary volunteer in a CAB, and described her experiences as a voluntary helper in a BBC radio broadcast in 1944.⁷ After the war she married an osteopath and started a family. She became a permanent volunteer at the CAB run by the Presbyterian Settlement in Poplar in 1954, and began writing articles and letters in the *New Statesman* and other newspapers drawing attention to London's housing problems and the plight of homeless families. Volunteering was crucial for her individual self-expression and identity.

Casualties of the Welfare State described the need for a non-political, non-sectarian CAB service as essential in any democracy. This, she argued, was especially so where the standards of state education were low and there was strong and growing bureaucratic control.⁸ Harvey recognized that, through her CAB advice work, she was dealing with a minority of the working class who had not benefited from rising standards of affluence. She acknowledged that, in her bureau, a high proportion of those enquiring were working class. Most of the men were dock workers, seamen, lorry drivers or were employed in factories or on building sites; while their wives, if they worked, were often office cleaners, factory hands or canteen workers. She criticized the tendency of public officials to look on this group as second-class citizens, less sensitive, physically and emotionally than themselves, and also as less deserving of respect and consideration. This was evident in the poor quality of the public services provided for these groups. She suggested that Britain was a divided society and that the feeling of common responsibility and comradeship of wartime was disappearing. More specifically, she criticized the system of legal advice and legal aid, the introduction of charges for homeless people in welfare homes, in the health services and the severity of regulations governing National Insurance and National Assistance.

⁶ Alan Wilkinson, 'Sheppard, Hugh Richard Lawrie (1880–1937)', *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, Oxford University Press, 2004; online edn, Jan 2011 [<http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/36061>, accessed 5 July 2012]

⁷ *The Listener*, 30 March 1944, 350.

⁸ Audrey Harvey, *Casualties of the Welfare state* (London: Fabian Society, 1960).

The pamphlet stimulated profound introspection within British political circles regarding the nature of the welfare society. *The Times* devoted an editorial to the questions it raised and it provided ammunition for the New Left and others unhappy with the relative political quietism of the 1950s. Richard Titmuss argued in 1960 that the rise of acquisitiveness had done lasting damage to the British welfare state. As well as criticizing the lack of social protest, he argued that governments had failed to advance and widen social democracy by breaking down barriers of social discrimination in public services and civilizing government.⁹ Greater social inventiveness was required, including new ways of relating citizens and consumers to services that intimately concerned them.¹⁰ According to Peter Townsend between seven and eight million people lived precariously close to the margins of poverty, most of whom were old, disabled or handicapped in some way.¹¹ He argued that British sociologists had failed to measure social change, or the incidence of poverty. O. R. McGregor, citing the lack of Royal Commissions into major social problems compared with the past, bemoaned the greater unwillingness of British society to discover, collect and face up to the social facts of life than at any time in the last hundred years.¹²

Harvey did not stop there, and in 1964 she produced a handbook offering advice to tenants of unscrupulous landlords. *Tenants in Danger*, was effectively a consumer guide for those renting privately and also looking to buy. Her guides supplemented those produced by the central CAB headquarters. Her work represents a significant contribution to the gradual shift in attitudes towards the welfare state and social work more widely. Like Barbara Wootton, Harvey was highly critical of the influence of psychotherapy and psychiatry over social work and its depoliticizing effect.¹³ Her pamphlets should be considered part of the general move towards social research and social action by social workers that continued during the 1960s and 1970s. This

⁹ Richard Titmuss, *The Irresponsible Society* (London: Fabian Society, 1960) 6.

¹⁰ *Ibid*, 10.

¹¹ Peter Townsend, 'A Society for People', in Norman Mackenzie, ed., *Conviction* (London: MacGibbon and Kee, London, 1958) 103-4.

¹² O. M. McGregor, 'Social Facts and Social Conscience', *The Twentieth Century*, (May 1960), 392.

¹³ For a recent account of Wootton's life and impact on the social sciences, see Ann Oakley, *A Critical Woman: Barbara Wootton, Social Science and Public Policy in the Twentieth Century* (London: Bloomsbury Academic, 2011).

pamphlet represented a serious attempt to present social workers as sources of information about the anomalies and deficiencies affecting social legislation.

Alongside such criticisms, through its continued advocacy of liberal values and emphasis on mediatory approaches to social conflict and the socialisation of its workers, CAB contributed to continuing post-war political stability. Its contribution to civic engagement and political participation must be considered in the light of the lack of positive advice or prescriptive commentary on political matters. There was a general reluctance to make suggestions or recommendations for ways of living. Political sociologists commenting on politics in this period were more likely to diagnose what was wrong with politics than to make recommendations.¹⁴ CAB also continued to support authority and to believe, by and large, in the benevolence of disinterested public officials, whether civil servants or professionals. However, such a view was harder to sustain in the light of growing awareness of continued poverty and continuing assessments by social workers et al of potential welfare recipients as either feckless or undeserving. However the CAB continued to contribute to the legitimacy of the welfare state and the political system by educating enquirers about its legislation and ironing out problems where they occurred.

Alongside the general political stability, individual bureaux and headquarters continued to be important in rectifying failings or gaps in the welfare state. One important area of work concerned tribunal proceedings. CAB could and did provide support, mostly of a moral nature, where legal representation was impossible, as in the case of employment problems of those not belonging to trade unions. Overall the CAB considered the operation of tribunals to be good, but on the occasion when they were not efficient or impartial, CAB headquarters were not afraid to criticise those responsible. For example, in 1960 the National CAB Committee wrote to the Office of the National Insurance Commissioner to complain of the treatment of two appellants. These appellants had come to London for the first time to be present at their hearing at 11:30 am. Both women, accompanied by bureaux workers from Lancashire, arrived at 11:20. In the course of their commute across London they were forced to transfer from

¹⁴ See Peter Laslett and W. G. Runciman, eds. *Philosophy, Politics and Society* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1962).

the underground to the bus to avoid being late, and so had spent 10d instead of 9d on fares. The two appellants were interrogated by the clerks as to why their fares were 1d more than necessary and then publicly rebuked them for being late.¹⁵ In another case, the CAB helped a family from Cyprus obtain medical treatment through the NHS after a review by the Ministry of Health. The letter to the Ministry of Health criticised officials for making mistakes not through any deliberate fault, but through too rigid interpretation of guidance.¹⁶

Early in 1960, CAB headquarters wrote to the Ministry of National Insurance to report an anomaly discovered by the bureau in Worsley, Manchester. They drew attention to the gap in provision for young people who fell ill immediately upon leaving school and before their sixteenth birthday, since in these circumstances they were unable to claim National Assistance in their own right and would not yet have qualified for payment of National Insurance benefit. In one case, headquarters and the local CAB helped the mother of a boy in this situation prepare her case, first for the local appeal tribunal and, when this failed, for the Commissioner. The secretary of the Worsley bureau accompanied the mother to the tribunal.¹⁷ In another example, Chloe Davis, Information Officer at the CAB headquarters contacted the National Assistance Board to see if anything could be done to help vulnerable people, such as the mentally ill, appearing before the National Assistance Board Advisory Committees. Davis argued that these people should be accompanied by a case worker to tribunal hearings, in order to help them before and afterwards in preparing their case.¹⁸

In other cases, CAB continued to highlight the needs of special groups needing extra attention, who had slipped through the social services net unnoticed. Many of the outcomes achieved by individual bureaux were due to one to one contact with individual government departments, officials or Ministers. In a meeting between the Secretary of the CAB Council, and the NAB, the former raised concerns about mentally

¹⁵ MSS 282B/809 1/2 CAB Appx III - Letter from NABC to Office of NI Commission, A. D. Church, sec, 26 May 1960.

¹⁶ MSS 282B/809 1/2 Appendix IV letter Min H to NCABC, 29 September 1960 re Kyriakos Stavrou Chrysanthou

¹⁷ Unfortunately the available records don't state the outcome of the Commissioner's decision, MSS 292c 806.1/4

¹⁸ TNA AST 7/1745 Letter Mrs C Davies to Miss FM Collins, NAB 15 January 1962

ill people being inspected by advisory committees; about cases where rent costs were not met through National Assistance; and to reinforce the issue of the increase in numbers of young unemployed people unable to claim National Assistance in their own right. The CAB also pushed the department to publicise the principles on which the Board exercised discretion, but it refused to do so.¹⁹

Broadly, the outcomes for society and for the volunteers were positive. These included the reopening of political questions previously considered closed, such as levels of democratic participation. The so-called benevolence of experts and professionals and official administrators was being called into question for the first time. The CAB did not uphold elitism, but rather sought to break down barriers where they existed between the classes and between professionals and the public. The smooth running of the welfare state was not the only outcome and CAB continued to achieve positive outcomes in cases where the state failed to deliver. Local authorities, government departments, and the police continued to accept the need for the bureaux, though this was not always translated into effective financial support.

In terms of its contribution to debates over citizenship, there was a noticeable decline in the moral, republican, communitarian rhetoric of citizenship that had fuelled the CAB previously. There was a move towards a more individualist, rights-based, materialist, contract-based rhetoric. This signalled a move away from the wartime rhetoric of shared sacrifice and social solidarity. There was a noticeable tension between those who wished to serve the ordinary man and woman with a temporary problem as well as the more disadvantaged in society who continued to exist despite the welfare state. As research began to reveal the problems of the welfare state the CAB began to question its own values and tactics.²⁰ However, by and large, the CAB continued as before, providing incredibly useful services to the community and to the individual in trouble.

¹⁹ TNA AST 7/1745 Note of meeting, Miss KM Oswald, CV Davis of NCABC and Mr Windsor and Mr Randall, 25 February 1963.

²⁰ For examples of research, see Brian Abel-Smith and Peter Townsend, *The Poor and the Poorest: A New Analysis of the Ministry of Labour's Family Expenditure Surveys of 1953-54 and 1960*. (London: G. Bell and Sons, 1965).

7.6. Conclusion

By 1964 the CAB had travelled a long way from its position in 1959. A partial resurgence had begun with the return of government financial assistance. It moved towards greater emphasis on training and organization. To what extent this was at the cost of other, non-material values, is debatable. The CAB continued to provide useful advice to those using the social services and those confronted with most kinds of social problems. It continued to espouse social democratic values of universalism and social justice. However, cracks were beginning to appear beneath the service and CAB struggled to resist calls to become a specialist organization focusing on the very poor. Selectivity and class prejudice were evident in some workers, but these were, by and large, the minority. The majority of workers continued to be as helpful as possible. Some activists even went further towards campaigning for specific individual injustices. As had been the case in the 1950s, the lack of consensus over the precise nature of the role of the state meant that relationship between state and civil society was complex and diverse. There was never an agreed consensus on the precise role of voluntary organizations like the CAB and the issue remained as contested as ever.

8. Conclusion

This thesis has charted the history of a unique but invaluable voluntary organization – the Citizen’s Advice Bureau – its aims and goals, structure, resources, volunteers and relations with its environment, as well as the outcomes it produced for British society over a twenty five year period. The CAB had come a long way since its creation in 1939. It had developed from a service provided sporadically by a number of different organizations, towards an organized service with a defined corporate identity and values. It was more professionalised in its delivery of services than had been the case in the 1940s. It was smaller, albeit more professionalised, and more geared towards the needs of the individuals who used it. It had continued to evolve across the years, both in its membership and in its work. The history of a unique institution such as the CAB highlights the continuing importance of voluntary effort to the British welfare services and the welfare state. As well as acting as a service provider, the CAB acted as a moderate campaigning group, pushing the state to improve its services, or to create services where none existed. In providing greater scope for access to administrative justice, the CAB also provides evidence for political interpretations of the British constitution over more legalistic, ‘rights based’ understandings. Overall, the thesis has shown that voluntary organizations did not decline with the expansion of the wartime and post-war welfare state, but grew alongside it, adapting to new roles and functions.

Economically and socially, the outstanding feature of this period was the growth in the sense of material well-being after the Second World War among almost all classes except for a small but significant minority of old age pensioners, widows and other single parents, some members of large families and some people in irregular employment. Outside these groups there was a general rise in living standards, and medicine and education became potentially available for all. Affluence was more widespread than in the 1930s, with a new band of lower middle class and skilled workers enjoying its fruits. However, as *The Poor and the Poorest* highlighted, between seven and eight million low paid, or disabled, or unemployed people missed out on

affluence, and for these people, voluntary organizations such as the CAB continued to fulfil a vital role alongside the welfare state.²¹

The aims of the CAB remained broadly constant during the first 25 years of the organization's existence. These aims reflected a continuing determination to produce informed citizens who could operate confidently within the post-war social democratic consensus. Behind this aim was the shared belief that information and advice were vital rights of citizenship, especially in a social democracy. The CAB was influenced in its goals by republican conceptions of citizenship which stated that participation and civic virtue are vital characteristics of the good citizen. The aim of the CAB was to assist individuals in their dealings with a potentially arbitrary state and to share decision making with the state.

The CAB was not a conservative organization resisting change, as some critics in the 1960s claimed. It remained consensual in its approach and methods. This was in keeping with the political climate of the time, and the introspective and defensive nature of political liberalism, especially against a backdrop of the cold war. The CAB was reformist in its aims and piecemeal in its approach. For later critics, this approach ignored the potential for conflict between social groups and, in the case of the CAB, for potential conflict between the individual citizen and the state. The CAB, it was later argued, had ignored the need to advocate explicitly rather than to educate or act as counsel to citizens ignored or damaged by the malpractices of the welfare state, errant landlords or commercial organizations. This thesis has shown how existing accounts of voluntary organizations as uniformly conservative in scope and outlook in the 1940s and 1950s as partial at best, and misleading at worst.²² It also shows that criticisms by the more media-savvy pressure groups of the 1960s and 1970s, such as Child Poverty Action Group, were relatively unfounded, designed as they were to support their own approach to a new brand of expert professional voluntary activity where service

²¹ Brian Abel-Smith and Peter Townsend, *The Poor and the Poorest: A New Analysis of the Ministry of Labour's Family Expenditure Surveys of 1953-54 and 1960*. (London: G. Bell and Sons, 1965).

²²For similar views see Matthew Hilton, Nick Crowson, Jean-Francois Mouhot et al., eds. *A Historical Guide to NGOs in Britain: Charities, Civil Society and the Voluntary Sector since 1945* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2012).

provision often played second fiddle to campaigning, media work and raising awareness.

The goal of the CAB was to provide information and advice on the legal and social rights of the individual across a wide range of areas. From the turn of the twentieth century this had become increasingly important following the gradual expansion of the common law to include offences created by statutory regulations. As E. C. S. Wade commented in his introduction to the ninth edition of the jurist A.V. Dicey's *Introduction to the Study of the Law of the Constitution*, published in 1939, it was important that the individual 'should have the assurance that the law can be ascertained with reasonable certainty.'²³

In informing citizens, the CAB was fulfilling a function that had been left unfilled by the state, by local authorities and by professionals, who were not necessarily willing, or financially able to commit time and resources towards explaining their function to the less well off and less educated members of society. The 1945 Labour Government's determination to produce a nation of participants included plans to use the CAB as agents of information dispersal alongside local authorities, but austerity measures and a change of government, ensured that this plan was not implemented. Instead, one main source of information, the Central Office of Information had its budgets slashed, while local authorities also under financial pressure to cut their own publicity and public relations budgets. In many cases local authorities preferred to make a token donation to the local Citizens Advice Bureau.

The CAB carried out its work across a wide range of areas, but its goal remained constant. These areas included information on wartime regulations, advice on benefits, housing advice, consumer issues and personal relationships. It never lost touch with its origins in a time of national emergency, and this was reflected in its work during the 1953 North Sea Floods affecting the east of England. As time went on, the CAB conducted its work in new areas and responded to social change by adapting its work

²³ E. C. S. Wade and G. Godfrey Phillips, *Constitutional Law: An Outline of the Law and Practice of the Constitution, Including Central and Local Government and the Constitutional Relations of the British Commonwealth* (5th edn., London: Longmans, Green and Co., 1958), 62.

to new areas of social concern that threatened to overwhelm or confuse the individual citizen.

Behind its work lay several underlying principles that were relevant to large swathes of civil society in mid-twentieth century Britain. One important principle was that of liberal progressivism, for the CAB was committed to educating citizens in the rights and responsibilities of citizenship. In addition, it sought to campaign and influence the state to reform its services where these were thought to be lacking in some degree, for example concerning national insurance benefits, or to create a new social service where the need was great, for example the Consumer Council.

The organizational fortunes of the CAB certainly took a dip in the 1950s. Troubled by a lack of financial resources, its organizational infrastructure took the brunt of the financial cuts resulting from the loss of central government financial support. With the loss of infrastructure came a loss of central control over the doings and operations of many of the individual bureaux. This could either be viewed as a time of glorious internal democracy, where individual bureaux functioned as they wished, concentrating on social problems which interested the individuals working there. Or it could be seen as the nadir of the organization, where bumbling amateurism was rife and running threadbare organizations that deliberately eschewed modern professional methods of organization or social work became almost a matter of pride. Being seen to survive on as small an income as possible became the mark of the true 'martyr' volunteer. Neither image is particularly accurate and both are misleading in the sense that individual bureaux exhibited a wide range of levels of professionalism and accountability.

As the CAB came more and more into contact with the state and cooperated with it, the more they resembled it. Concerns with accountability and professionalism increased as the CAB moved closer to the state, and made financial demands of it. The CAB's and other voluntary organizations' move towards more professional methods of work were fuelled by a desire to cooperate with the state, not compete with it, as well as a desire to demonstrate that voluntary social services could be just as efficient and as professional as statutory services. However, this strategy was expensive and,

organizationally, it required a centralised approach that grew around the state apparatus, often inheriting many of its characteristics.

Other organizations continued to give out advice and information alongside the CAB. Local political parties, trade unions, other voluntary organizations, and social workers continued to supply information and advice on welfare. National and local newspapers also provided information and advice to individuals writing in. Newspaper 'agony aunts' were often preferred where the matter concerned personal and sexual relationships, presumably due to the anonymity that a correspondence with a newspaper provided. An important source of advice was provided, until 1974, through the John Hilton Bureau run by the News of the World. The CAB veered between competing with these organizations, and feeling confident that its services were better due to their thoroughness and the human element that face-to-face contact with a CAB worker entailed.

The motives for volunteering for the CAB were more complex than a simple desire to increase social capital or shore up elite status within the community. Religious motives certainly played a part in some circumstances. Quakers, such as the notable social work educator Roger Wilson, were heavily involved with the CAB from the beginning.²⁴ This simplistic reading belies the complexity of motives for volunteering. Some volunteered for deeply personal reasons related to their individual circumstances. Others volunteered for more social reasons, because they enjoyed the company and excitement of working for the organization. A third group, including such volunteers as Audrey Harvey volunteered as an avenue for non-party political activism.

The CAB and similar voluntary organizations did not always see eye-to-eye with the state. Relations were not always easy as can be seen from the discussion over the CAB's relationship with the newly created Consumer Council. The CAB valiantly defended its independence from the state while simultaneously attempting to spell out its utility to it. This sometimes tense relationship was made more complex by the need

²⁴ Fred Brown, *The Making of a Modern Quaker: Roger Cowan Wilson, 1906-1991* (London: Epworth Press, London 1996), 67-9. Roger Wilson worked for the BBC during the Second World War but was sacked for his outspoken pacifism. He led the Society of Friends' War Victims' Relief Service in Britain and post-war Europe. He was also Professor of Education at Bristol University.

for financial support. Government funding had been present at the creation of the CAB and its sudden removal in the late 1940s presented it with a serious problem. Partly through design, and partly through necessity, the CAB was never able to forge a separate path from the state. Rather it attempted to lobby government to provide financial support in recognition of its value to the welfare state. In the event, the CAB was rewarded with renewed financial support from the state in 1960.

The CAB was in constant conflict with the stereotypes and caricatures painted of it and its volunteers by political parties and other interested parties. For the left, the image remained in some quarters of the volunteer worker as the middle class amateur lady of leisure, or lady bountiful, happily dispensing gruel to grateful down and outs. For the right, the volunteer was the epitome of liberal and socially democratic values, doing what the state could not do, upholders of a glorious British tradition of voluntary service that had been disrupted by the advent of the welfare state and its development after the Second World War. Voluntary workers in this view were heroic individuals, clearing up the mess left after the state had got involved. In most cases both images were far off the mark. Volunteers for the CAB could be democratic and liberal in their outlook. This was particularly noticeable in the case of the CAB, and aligned with its broader goal of acting as a safety valve in a democratic system such as Britain's. The CAB and other voluntary organizations were envisaged as being at the heart of Britain's democratic processes, allowing people to associate and proclaim their views. For some volunteers, work with the CAB provided a better link with politics than political parties. For example, as we saw in chapters six and seven, Audrey Harvey, and Florence Phillips, volunteers in the very different locations of East London and Tunbridge Wells respectively, choose CAB as an outlet for their political aspirations, rather than supporting a political party.

These and other outcomes are increasingly important to modern society. From April 2013, social welfare law will be taken 'out of the scope' of legal aid. Legal aid and advice will be abolished for all welfare benefit matters, debt, employment and all housing cases except where a person's home is at "immediate risk" or where housing disrepair poses a serious threat to health. Legal aid and advice on issues involving

immigration status and family breakdown will also be abolished, except where detention, domestic violence, child protection or state childcare is involved.²⁶

More research is still required if historians are to fully understand the history of voluntary organizations in modern Britain. This thesis contains a number of limitations which will hopefully be addressed by future historians. First, given the lack of data and sources of Welsh and Scottish CAB, this thesis has not been able to draw comparisons across the United Kingdom with regard to the success of the voluntary sector in assisting the welfare state in post-war Britain. Second, the thesis doesn't fully address the perspectives and motivations of the end-users of voluntary organizations such as the CAB. Further research into the users of the CAB would help us to understand the extent to which it was the natural organization to approach in times of need, as the CAB's organizers all too readily claimed. Furthermore such research would reveal the extent to which users (and perhaps volunteers) subscribed to the values and ideology of the CAB. Such research would help understand the wider role of the voluntary sector in British history and the present day, as well as the role that volunteering has played in the construction of people's identities and sense of self. Finally, an in-depth case study of one local CAB over a twenty to thirty year period might help to address some of the limitations of this thesis in terms of the exact nature of the relationship between a bureau and its local population, its volunteers, and local authority. Such a project might aim to conduct interviews with former volunteers on a methodical basis. Finally future research should also focus on more detail of Labour's attitudes to voluntary effort and voluntary organizations in the latter half of the twentieth century.

Some of these limitations of this thesis have partly been caused by a lack of access to robust data and to a lack of historical sources. This history of the CAB has been pieced together from multiple archives across England and has, in places, been led by the availability of certain sources over others. There is a lack of historical sources regarding the national coverage of the CAB, and of its volunteers. This has had to be pieced together from multiple and sometimes fragmented sources. There are also understandable concerns regarding confidentiality and data protection. This has made it difficult to sometimes tell the full story of people's interactions with the CAB.

²⁶ http://www.citizensadvice.org.uk/index/pressoffice/press_index/press_20120306.htm

Voluntary sector archives are under intense financial pressure at a time when voluntary organization's funds are, understandably, being channelled into service-provision. Many voluntary organizations also lack the expertise and knowledge of dedicated archivists, and this makes data collection for researchers problematic. The recently launched Campaign for Voluntary Sector Archives is currently seeking to raise awareness of the importance of voluntary sector archives as important assets for research.²⁷

These and other limitations will hopefully be addressed in future research. While voluntary sector finances are being cut in some areas, currently, there is also greater commissioning of voluntary organizations to take on certain local and central government activities. This has led to renewed concerns surrounding the independence of the voluntary sector.²⁸ To further protect that independence it is of the utmost importance that historians continue to assess and evaluate the voluntary sector's role in providing welfare services alongside the state, and its contribution to the wider health of British democracy.

²⁷ <http://www.voluntarysectorarchives.org.uk/archives/1> [accessed 29 July 2013].

²⁸ *Second Report of the Panel on the Independence of the Voluntary Sector: Independence Under Threat: the Voluntary Sector in 2013*. <http://www.independencepanel.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2013/01/Independence-Under-Threat-The-Voluntary-Sector-in-2013-WebVersion12.pdf> [accessed 29 July 2013].

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AC 73/46/25 Region 5 P-S

AC 73/46/26 Region 5 T-Y

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AC 73/46/28 Region 8 C-S

AC 73/46/29 Regions 9 & 10

AC 73/46/30 Region 11

AC 73/46/31 Region 12

Bureaux

AC 73/46/32 Accrington-Amersham

AC 73/46/33 Bacup-Blackburn

AC 73/46/34/Blackpool – Bury St. Edmunds

AC 73/46/35 Birmingham

AC 73/46/36 Camberley-Cheadle

AC 73/46/37 Chelmsford-Chippenham

AC 73/46/38 Christchurch-Crawley

AC 73/46/39 Derby-Durham City

AC 73/46/40 East Grinstead-Eccles

AC 73/46/41 Ellesmere Port-Exmouth

AC 73/46/42 Fareham-Frome

AC 73/46/43 Gainsborough-Gloucester
AC 73/46/44 Gorleston-Guildford
AC 73/46/45 Halifax-Hawards Heath
AC 73/46/46 Heburn-Hitchin
AC 73/46/47 Hoddeston-Hull
AC 73/46/48 Ilkeston-Isle of Wight
AC 73/46/49 Kendal-King's Lynn
AC 73/46/50 Lancaster-Lewes
AC 73/46/51 Lincoln-Lynton
AC 73/46/52 Maidenhead-Morcombe
AC 73/46/53 Nantwich-Nuneaton
AC 73/46/54 Oldham-Oxted
AC 73/46/55 Penrith-Pudsey
AC 73/46/56 Ramsgate-Runcorn
AC 73/46/57 St. Albans-Shoreham
AC 73/46/58 Skegness-Southport
AC 73/46/59 Stafford-Southport on Severn
AC 73/46/60 Stroud-Swinton
AC 73/46/61 Taunton-Tonbridge Wells
AC 73/46/62 Urmston-Uttoxeter. Yarnfield, Yeoville, York.
AC 73/46/63 Wakefield-Watford
AC 73/46/64 Wellingborough-Wigan
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AC 73/46/73 Closed Bureaux Region 3
AC 73/46/74 Closed Bureaux Region 4
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AC 73/46/76 Closed Bureaux Region 5 L-Z
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